Sojourn through Spiritual and Religious Tension: A Quantitative Study of Intercultural Competence and Worldview Development

Naomi Ludeman Joy Smith
Bethel University, n-smith@bethel.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://spark.bethel.edu/etd

Part of the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation

This Doctoral thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Spark. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Spark.
BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY

SOJOURN THROUGH SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS TENSION:
A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND
WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN GLOBAL AND CONTEXTUAL LEADERSHIP

BY

NAOMI J. LUDEMAN SMITH
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
JUNE 2010
Sojourn Through Spiritual and Religious Tension: 
A Quantitative Study of Intercultural Competence 
and Worldview Development

by

Dr. Naomi Ludeman Smith

Accepted by the Thesis Examining Committee in fulfillment of the 
requirements for the degree, Doctor of Ministry.

Committee Members:

Dr. Doug Magnuson, Thesis Advisor

Dr. Justin Irving, Research Design Reader

Dr. David Ridder, Faculty Member

Dr. Samuel Rima, Director

7/27/10
Date

7/22/10
Date

7/22/10
Date

7/22/10
Date
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To many I owe thanks for sharing their knowledge and encouragement to complete this thesis project. To a few I must express specific gratitude:

To the students who served as research participants and to those who trusted me to lead and to share our sojourns, seeking the sacred with others.

To Bethel University colleagues and the National Alumni Committee for affording me the resources to travel, research and write. It says to many, “We believe in the importance of this work and we trust you to do it.”

To Drs. Wilbur Stone, Douglas Magnuson, Karen Drake and Sandra Pettingell for sharing their expertise and encouragement, and for opening the door of possibility, believing I could and should enter.

To many cherished friends in other lands who have welcomed me into their lives and shared our ways of making sense of the mysteries of life, culture and ourselves.

To my family—Claire, Madeleine, Calvin and Amanda, Nancy and Don—for your patient encouragement of my love for learning and adventure. Thank you dear ones.

To Greg, from your first prayer on the first day of class to your last read and edit, I am forever grateful for your acts that say, “Be who God has called you to be.” I am in love with you forever.

To the sacred, for inviting me to the journey, the fascination, the beauty. Might you be pleased. Let this work be a light on the path toward Peace.
CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

CONTENTS ................................................................................................................................. iv

TABLES ................................................................................................................................... viii

GLOSSARY .............................................................................................................................. ix

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................. xi

CHAPTER ONE: CROSS-CULTURAL SOJOURNERS AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT ...................................................................... 1

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1
Problem ................................................................................................................................. 3
Delimitations ....................................................................................................................... 8
Assumptions ....................................................................................................................... 8
Subproblems and Hypothesis ......................................................................................... 9
Setting of the Project ....................................................................................................... 10
Importance of the Project ............................................................................................... 16
Research Methodology ................................................................................................... 21

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR MULTICULTURAL WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT ................................................. 27

The Call: A Light to All Nations ....................................................................................... 27
The Problem: An Ethnocentric Worldview and Competence ..................................... 33
An Answer: Welcoming the Other ............................................................................... 34
Old Testament Narratives of Developing a Multicultural Worldview ....................... 37
Abram’s and Sarai’s Sojourn to Develop Intercultural Competence ....................... 37
Joseph Grows in Godly Wisdom Through Alterity ..................................................... 40
TABLES

3.1. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) .......... 94

4.1. Study abroad culture regions, total participants ........................................ 127

4.2. Type of study abroad program ................................................................. 129

4.3. Study abroad culture regions, control and treatment group ..................... 131

4.4. Participants’ culture preparation and study abroad conditions .............. 132

4.5. IDI sample questions for worldview domains ................................. 137

4.6. IDI feedback example ................................................................. 138

4.7. Measures of interest ................................................................. 143

5.1. IDI developmental scores ................................................................. 152

5.2. Comparison of IDI developmental difference scores ......................... 152

5.3. Comparison of IDI developmental pre-test and post-test scores .......... 152

5.4. Intervention dosage components ....................................................... 153

5.5. Average developmental change scores, by dosage group ................. 155

5.6. Pre-test IDI developmental score and worldview profile ............... 158

5.7. Post-test IDI developmental score and worldview profile .............. 159

5.8. IDI overall developmental score of intercultural sensitivity .......... 159

5.9. IDI domain subscale, total participants ............................................ 160

6.1. Intervention dosage components ....................................................... 166

6.2. Tension due to religious and spiritual stress and discomfort .......... 173
GLOSSARY

alterity: “developmental forms of relating to the differentness of others”¹ and “the internal configuration of self and other”²

culture: shared and integrated systems of valuing, knowing and feeling which people use to interpret their experience and generates behaviors that are characteristic of the members of a society

critical incident: an experience in which one’s cultural norms and worldview are challenged and emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual tension is experienced

differentiation: the ability to identify and articulate that something (e.g., behavior, belief system, worldview, value, ritual, etc.) is different from that with which one is familiar and that this difference is part of the identity of another person and/or culture

ethnocentrism: “assuming that the worldview of one’s own culture is central to all reality”³

ethnorelativism: “the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context”⁴

intercultural and cross-cultural: often used interchangeably; for this thesis cross-cultural refers to interaction between two cultures. Intercultural refers to interaction between several cultures

¹ Steven J. Sandage, Mary L. Jensen, and Daniel Jass, “Relational Spirituality and Transformation:

² F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage, Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 165.


⁴ Ibid., 46.
intercultural competence: the ability to experience and interact with cultural and worldview differences using sophisticated and culturally sensitive knowledge, skills and attitudes

intercultural sensitivity: “the capacity to generate increasingly more complex perceptions and experience of cultural differences”⁵

monocultural and ethnocentric: often used interchangeably; for this thesis, monocultural is especially imagined as understanding and experiencing life from a single culture lens or perspective

multicultural and ethnorelative: often used interchangeably; for this writing, multicultural is imagined as understanding and experiencing life from multiple culture lenses or perspectives

relational spirituality: “how we each relate to the developmental and existential challenges of making meaning in the midst of the ambiguity of life”⁶

religion: a common set of beliefs, values and practices (e.g., communion, baptism, traditions, etc.) held by a group of people that inform them of what is right and wrong, how to live life and how to make sense of the meaning and essence of life

seeking the sacred: a spiritual and psychological search for ultimate truth that is set apart as holy and beyond the ordinary⁷

spirituality: a person’s individual and/or collective reflection, experience and interaction with the Divine

worldview: “the most fundamental and encompassing view of reality shared by a people in a culture. . . . [It] incorporates assumptions about the nature of things”⁸

worldview orientation: Milton Bennett’s reference to a worldview domain in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity; the six domains are: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration

---

⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁶ Shults and Sandage, 161.

⁷ Ibid., 156-158.

ABSTRACT

In today’s increasingly interculturally connected world, educators are charged to prepare students to be productive global citizens. The dilemma is determining pedagogy to effectively support students through the intercultural challenges they face during cross-cultural experiences. This quantitative study investigated intercultural competence and worldview development, based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, and the relationship to students’ reflective processing of their spiritual and religious tension during a semester study abroad. To explore this relationship, the researcher applied a quasi-experimental strategy of inquiry using nonrandomized control (N=56) and treatment (N=42) groups. The voluntary participants were undergraduate students from a liberal arts university who were studying abroad for one semester in various types of programs in eight culture regions.

The Intercultural Development Inventory was used to obtain participants’ comparative pre- and post-experience worldview development measurements. A second questionnaire collected participant reports about culture and language study before and during the study abroad, levels of interaction with host nationals, intensity factors and processing practices. Participants voluntarily read and worked through a workbook—the intervention. Among other things, the workbook instructed readers about worldview development and a particular reflective approach to process the cross-cultural sojourn.
Analysis of the data indicated that while both the control and treatment groups’ worldview did develop, the change was not significant for the treatment group. In fact, the control group showed a higher average change score and was statistically significant. Though the numbers were small, analysis also showed a significant change score difference for those participants who both read the intervention and reflected about cultural differences, especially spiritual and religious differences. Those who only read the intervention showed significant negative worldview development. Finally, the study offers data supporting literature regarding confounding variables of student preparation, study location and social interaction that contribute to worldview development.
CHAPTER ONE

CROSS-CULTURAL SOJOURNERS AND
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Hardly a single person can deny the impact of globalization. No matter where people work or live in this world, their contact and engagement with others who have distinctly different cultures and worldviews continues to increase. History repeatedly shows, however, that bloodshed, oppression and genocide often are fueled when humankind fails to understand the perspectives and values of cultural similarities and differences. As interculturalist Milton Bennett observes, “Intercultural sensitivity is not natural. It is not part of our primate past.” Knowing this history and human proclivity, good-willed people seek to celebrate the similarities of different cultures. Often, though, this is where they stop because they do not know what to do with the challenge of differences. Others tolerate differences with little depth or sophisticated knowledge or skills of how to process the differences. They do not know how to build positive and productive relationships with people different from themselves. Fortunately, the growing conviction is that people can and must develop the knowledge and skills to be collaborative and productive intercultural world citizens. The burning question, then, is how humans develop intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to engage peacefully and productively with people who hold distinctly different worldviews.

Confrontation with cultural differences and the emotions it produces often forces people to choose between isolating and withdrawing from the affective, behavioral and cognitive messiness, or engaging in the complexity of negotiating the inevitable worldview tensions that result. The instance of confrontation is the critical experience of intensification that sojourners can have during cross-cultural experiences. A person with intercultural competence is someone who knows how to process these critical experiences, developing the skills and capacity to negotiate the cultural similarities and differences. This confrontation requires cross-cultural sojourners “to be emotionally resilient in responding to the challenges and frustrations” when humans engage with different worldviews and the belief systems within those worldviews.

As humankind experiences a world ablaze with strife, partially due to people lacking intercultural competence, trainers and educators in particular are realizing the significance of their role in addressing this challenge. Society has given teachers the charge to prepare their students to live as productive and participative citizens. Bennett asserts that “the concept of fundamental difference in cultural worldview is the most problematic and threatening idea that many of us ever encounter. Learners (and teachers) employ a wide range of strategies to avoid confronting the implications of such differences.” Today’s interdependent world demands that educators learn how to

---


prepare their students to be global citizens and world-changers and to productively confront the implications of diversity.

One way this is happening in higher education is through the increase of teachers who lead, facilitate and administer study abroad programs for students. From 2001 to 2006, study abroad participation among United States students in higher education increased by 20 percent\(^{12}\) and 144 percent since 1996.\(^{13}\) Both teachers and students who engage in this experiential pedagogy with the purpose of developing world citizen competencies confront cultural differences and frustrations. They have to choose how to process the tension that the confrontation creates. Therefore, the educator’s task is to better understand this phenomenon when people with diverse worldviews confront each other and to find ways to intervene with the learners. Educators must learn how to effectively support their students before, during and after their cross-cultural sojourns to encourage the development of their intercultural competence skills. All must learn how to avoid fueling the blaze of strife and, instead to harness the transforming resources that cultural and worldview differences can offer to world citizens.

**Problem**

The primary focus in this thesis project is to study the phenomenon of how a person’s worldview develops as a result of cross-cultural interaction. More specifically, its focus is to explore methods to support cross-cultural sojourners to process the tension

---


that the interaction can create. The assumption is that if the sojourner processes the tension well, the person is more likely to develop competencies that reflect a multicultural worldview. A second assumption is that spirituality and religion are often at the core of the tension because they are at the core of peoples’ worldviews; therefore, sojourners must effectively process these dimensions if they are to become interculturally competent and transformative world citizens. The problem is that those who support cross-cultural sojourners do not yet have a deep body of empirical knowledge about effective pedagogies to support sojourners’ spiritual and religious tensions toward a transformative end. Therefore, the goal of this study is to test the effectiveness of a pedagogy that supports cross-cultural sojourners to this end and to do so by measuring intercultural competence change, which reflects worldview development.

Simply stated, intercultural competence is the ability to experience and interact with cultural and worldview differences using culturally sensitive knowledge, skills and attitudes. To develop intercultural competencies, sojourners must be willing to engage deeply with others who have different worldviews from their own and then have the courage to confront the core assumptions of their own worldviews. This kind of intimate and epistemological engagement is referred to as “alterity.” When cross-cultural sojourners engage in alterity, they are inevitably engaging with others’ beliefs and belief systems. Beliefs are “bodies of knowledge that emerge in response to key questions [about life’s experiences] and agreed-upon methods to find answers.”¹⁴ Beliefs and belief systems are intricate to and foundational in one’s worldview and its development.¹⁵ Most


¹⁵ Ibid., 40.
often humans develop and share these belief systems with a group of people and together they hold a collective belief regarding what is truth. This often is how a religion is started and maintained. Religion is “beliefs about the ultimate nature of things, as deep feelings and motivations, and as fundamental values and allegiances.”¹⁶ Spirituality is the intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships one has with both the sacred and others about matters of beliefs and belief systems. Therefore, religion and spirituality are at the core of one’s worldview. When they are challenged by other beliefs and belief systems, the confrontation results in deep epistemological tension. This is often the experience of the cross-cultural sojourner.

To develop intercultural competencies, sojourners must go deep within themselves to recognize, understand and discern these experiences of tension. In the midst of the cross-cultural experience, sojourners must explore how their culture influences their worldview beliefs and the behavior and values that express their beliefs. The reason is that “the worldview lies at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with, and strongly influencing every other aspect of the culture.”¹⁷ Therefore, sojourners must reflect on their tension and their culture’s influence on their worldview in order to face the assumptions that often support a worldview. Here is where the tension and turbulence begins. Upon reflection, sojourners usually challenge the unfounded beliefs that their culture supports and must face the question of what to do with the contrasting beliefs. They often question what is truth. They must decide if they are going to allow beliefs and new ways of thinking to influence and shift their worldview perspective.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

What happens psychologically and spiritually when people confront contrasting worldviews and the challenge to shift their paradigm? Psychologist Steven Sandage and theologian LeRon Shults integrated their areas of expertise to explore this question. In their book *Transforming Spirituality* they conclude that “spiritual transformations involve profound changes in self-identity and meaning in life, often following periods of significant stress and emotional turbulence.” Cross-cultural sojourners experience much internal spiritual and psychological tension. They confront the crucible of how people from a different culture make sense of life. Sojourners’ norms of self-identity and reality are challenged. This experience is often referred to as “psychological and spiritual intensification,” and the experience is called a “critical incident.” These experiences specifically challenge spiritual and psychological well-being, and emotions that are more intense than the normal, everyday experience. How one processes this critical incident directly determines its outcome.

Intercultural competence, then, is knowing how to effectively process the intense affective, behavioral and cognitive critical incident. It is the skill to detect differences, recognize and value one’s own worldview and accept as real the worldview of people of another culture, even if one doesn’t fully understand, share or even agree with the other worldview. Intercultural competence also involves the attitude and posture to embrace the tension and the associated differences and similarities. The cross-cultural sojourner does not have to accept the other worldview as the “true” worldview, but accept and respect the reality that others also hold their convictions as truth. People with intercultural competence also recognize that exploring others’ contrasting beliefs can offer insight into

---

life’s big questions, serving as a resource rather than a problem. To develop and practice these competencies, however, is no easy task.

Much of people’s experience and understanding of how to get along with those who are different from themselves is to tolerate these differences. Intercultural competence requires more than just tolerance, however. Developing or practicing tolerance toward people with differences rarely leads people to explore their own worldview or open themselves to others’ way of experiencing life. Tolerance is merely a way of protecting oneself from alterity, from the risk of deeply experiencing and relating to differentness. A person who seeks to tolerate another person’s differences rarely seeks to understand why there are the differences, especially if there is tension. Practicing only tolerance fails to teach people how to adapt one’s behavior and thinking in order to successfully relate to the perceived differentness of others. Tolerance, sadly enough, is the antithesis of cross-cultural competency.

Therefore, to develop cross-cultural competence a person must reach deeply into one’s self-identity, values, beliefs and belief systems and consider how culture influences these things. An interculturally competent person must develop the virtues of cultural respect and cultural humility. An interculturally competent person must develop “self and other” cultural awareness. An interculturally competent person must be able to respectfully and patiently advocate for one’s own convictions, knowing how to appropriately express those convictions in the particular cultural context. The intercultural educator’s challenge is to soundly support the cross-cultural sojourner to develop these competencies through the critical experiences. The problem is knowing
how to do this effectively through the potentially turbulent and spiritually transformational sojourn experience. Exploring this problem is the focus of this research.

**Delimitations**

The research setting and participants are limited to Bethel University’s College of Arts and Sciences undergraduate students who studied abroad for a 14 to 17 week semester. The research is limited to the study of the phenomenon of worldview development related to spirituality and religious intensification during a cross-cultural study abroad experience in undergraduate students due to the effect of a particular pedagogy offered to the study abroad students. Finally, the researcher measured only the development of intercultural worldview orientation in relationship to the intervention.

**Assumptions**

This study proceeds from the following assumptions. The first assumption is that an interculturally competent person has a multicultural worldview orientation. Second, it is assumed that the people and cultures of this world need interculturally competent people to move them toward a more just and peaceful existence. Third, the researcher assumes that one’s spirituality and belief systems are an integral grounding for one’s worldview. Fourth, the researcher assumes that cross-cultural sojourners are likely to experience intensification when they experience diverse worldviews and practices connected to spirituality and religion. The final assumption in this study is that one’s worldview can develop from an ethnocentric to a multicultural worldview orientation.
Subproblems and Hypothesis

The first subproblem was to discover what the Bible’s meta-narrative teaches about a multicultural worldview and intercultural competence. The second subproblem was to discover what scholarly literature reveals about the relationship of processing spiritual and religious tension to the phenomenon of worldview development as a result of cross-cultural interaction. These two subproblems are the theoretical basis to support the analysis and interpretation of the hypothesis and they support the methodology tenets and research study design.

The next set of subproblems is related to the research design. The third subproblem was to determine an appropriate tool to measure intercultural competence related to worldview. The fourth subproblem was to gain (a) comparative pre- and post-data from a control and treatment group that measures worldview development related to intercultural competence change and to gain (b) control and treatment group post-data regarding study abroad conditions and processing of spiritual and religious tension experienced during the cross-cultural experience. The fifth subproblem was to find or create and then apply a sound treatment that intervenes in sojourners’ spiritual intensification experiences during the cross-cultural experience. The sixth subproblem was to analyze and interpret the findings of this data using sound statistical conventions.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis ($H_0$) is that there is no relationship between processing spiritual and religious tensions experienced during cross-cultural engagement to that of the development of intercultural competence and a multicultural worldview. The alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) puts forth the hypothesis being tested that there is a significant
correlation between the practice of intentional reflection about one’s spirituality and religion during the critical incidents experienced in a cross-cultural sojourn and a change in one’s worldview. The researcher will use the alternative hypothesis during this writing.

**Setting of the Project**

The setting of this research is Bethel University’s College of Arts and Sciences (BU-CAS) in St. Paul, Minnesota. Bethel is a Christian liberal arts accredited university offering baccalaureate and advanced degrees in nearly 100 fields. The institution’s heritage and current administrators, faculty, staff and traditional age undergraduate students describe themselves as Christian. This thesis’s subjects are BU-CAS undergraduate students who studied abroad for 14 to 17 weeks and voluntarily participated in this study.

Bethel University states its mission as “boldly informed and motivated by the Christian faith, [our mission is to] educate and energize men and women for excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service in the church and throughout society.”¹⁹ This leading institution in Christian higher education seeks to nurture students toward maturity as whole and holy people so its students might have a positive impact on the world. “In short, Bethel University is taking the next step to change the world.”²⁰

One of the growing areas of institutional emphasis and practice is to nurture students to develop their global worldview and competence to be change agents for spiritual and social innovation. The assumption is that this goal is partially accomplished

---

¹⁹ “Bethel University Catalog 2009-2010” (St. Paul, MN: Bethel University, 2009), 8.
²⁰ Ibid., 7.
through a developmental general education curriculum that uniquely reflects a liberal arts study. In fall 2006, a new general education curriculum for undergraduate students was implemented at the University. Among its requirements is that students complete a sequence of courses to support what the institution refers to as its Global Citizenship values and objectives. One of the new requirements is that students have a significant, off-campus cross-cultural experience, domestic or international. The rationale is that “in order for every Bethel graduate to have a fuller and deeper understanding of the differing perspectives inherent in different cultures, some experience in an environment different from the Bethel community culture is required.”\(^{21}\) The objective is to move students from classroom, knowledge-based learning to an intense experiential learning in a cultural context distinctly different from their own. The University states the specific objectives as:

**Knowledge**
1. Recognize various personal, community, and cultural norms and their value in sustaining the culture.
2. Compare and contrast the contributions and lifestyles of various racial, cultural, and/or economic groups to the world.
3. Analyze how individual experiences, language, culture, family, and/or community values influence how one views the United States.

**Skills**
1. Communicate and collaborate with diverse individuals.
2. Reflect on one’s own cultural identity and the factors contributing to the formation of values, attitudes and beliefs of self and others.\(^{22}\)

This experience offers students the opportunity to increase their cognitive, behavioral and affective competency to successfully collaborate in cross-cultural relationships and tasks.

---


\(^{22}\) Ibid., n.p.
The Institution of International Education Open Door 2009 Report states that for universities awarding master’s degrees, Bethel ranked twelfth nationally in 2007-2008 for undergraduate participation in study abroad and 39th in the nation overall. In that school year, 52 percent of Bethel students studied abroad.\(^{23}\) Clearly, the University is moving forward in this Global Citizenship requirement and national agencies are recognizing its efforts.

Additional evidence suggests that the study abroad experience is influencing students’ worldview. Bethel’s CAS College Program Assessment Committee questioned the impact that the study abroad experience was having on students’ developing beliefs. In spring 2005 the committee measured the degree of students’ dogmatism, defined as “relatively unchangeable, unjustified certainty” using Altemeyer’s Dogmatism Scale.\(^{24}\) The assessment report qualified its understanding and institutional goals regarding dogmatism:

Scoring extremely low on this dogmatism scale is probably an indication that a student believes in little or nothing. However, we would expect students to become less dogmatic during their time interacting in a Christian Liberal Arts College. The phrase “I gently hold this firm belief” comes to mind when we think of the tacit goal of a Christian liberal arts education. We want our students to have “firm beliefs” but we also want them to be open-minded enough that they can examine evidence that may disconfirm some of their beliefs.\(^{25}\)

To observe the relationship between the study abroad experience and comparative levels of dogmatism, the Committee also queried the same students on whether or not they had


studied abroad. It found that students who spent a semester abroad had significantly lower dogmatism scores compared to students in the other categories. The report’s author discusses possible explanations for the 2006 findings:

[The research] seems to suggest that the semester abroad experience does significantly lower dogmatism. Also, the fact that students who planned to study abroad for a semester (but had not yet done so) had much higher dogmatism scores suggests that students who studied abroad for a semester were not already lower in dogmatism before their experience. Interestingly, students who spent [a January] interim overseas did not have lower dogmatism scores compared to the students who planned to go overseas for a semester or interim, or compared to students who do not plan to study abroad while at Bethel. This may indicate that spending 3 ½ weeks to a month overseas is not enough time to impact changes in dogmatism. It also may indicate that the types of experiences that students have during the interim study abroad programs do not facilitate changes in dogmatism. For example, if Bethel students are constantly together while overseas it may be more of a “Bethel in another country” experience rather than truly interacting with a different culture. At this point, these are all potential explanations.26

In the spring of 2006 the Assessment Committee “also found that students who studied abroad for a semester had significantly lower ethnocentrism scores (Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale) than the other groups.”27 The other groups were those who had not studied abroad.

The Assessment Committee did further investigation. In 2007, those students who studied abroad, “whether for a semester or interim, had significantly lower dogmatism scores compared to students who have plans to study abroad but have yet to have the experience. In previous years, interim abroad programs had no impact on lowering dogmatism.”28 These assessment reports are good news for the University and its

26 Ibid., 3.
27 Joel Frederickson, email message to author, Subject: Altemeyer’s Dogma Scales and BU Students, July 5, 2007.
objectives. They suggest that students are developing their openness to explore different worldviews and their own belief convictions as a result of their study abroad experience.

There is a problem, however, that hinders the institution’s values and goals to nurture students toward mature and effective global citizens. The problem is that additional studies suggest that students are not demonstrating a reasonably consistent development toward a multicultural worldview and the intercultural competencies that would support the University’s Global Citizenship goals. Something is happening in the study abroad experience, but in question is how it directly supports the world citizenship goals.

In spring 2008 students who studied abroad voluntarily participated in another assessment to measure their worldview development related to intercultural sensitivity using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). This 50-item questionnaire is based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Students completed the IDI prior to and at the end of their study abroad experience. This thesis’s writer was the principal researcher for the project and it was the control group study for this research. This 2008 assessment found that “students are engaging in rich, but inconsistent, experiences to support worldview development. More significant, they are not meeting the Cross-Cultural Experience category objectives; rather, they are experiencing and developing a surface exploration of cultural sensitivity and competency.”

---

Of the 56 participants, 64 percent did show significant worldview development related to intercultural competence. However, 36 percent of the participants went backwards toward an increased ethnocentric worldview. Of the thirty-two percent of the participants who moved from one worldview domain to another, only five percent moved from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative worldview perspective.\textsuperscript{30} The writer went on to recommend that the University explore curriculum and programs for ways to more closely support the Global Citizenship and Cross-Cultural Experience objectives.\textsuperscript{31} In effect, the 2008 study offers a base measurement of Bethel’s specific goals related to intercultural competence and global citizenship.

Though the institution is nationally noted for students studying abroad and the dogmatism assessments shows that religious beliefs are changing, the University does not demonstrate a consistently successful pedagogy to help students meet the intercultural competence objectives. Students and the University are investing significant physical, intellectual, spiritual and financial resources without a confident return on their investment. Many students are returning from their study abroad with a surface level of cultural awareness rather than developing demonstrated intercultural and transformational skill sets. Despite the students’ and University’s noble efforts, the spring 2008 study suggests that most students continue to view the world and its mosaic of people and cultures from a monocultural perspective, not understanding how to productively interact with the challenges that deep differences create. The students are not learning how to identify and respond positively to the assets that multicultural ways of knowing, being and doing can offer to those who seek to be world-changers.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 25.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 10-12.
What the University does know is that a particular religious conviction, that being Christian, is a significant grounding for BU-CAS students. This can be a strength when people engage in cross-cultural collaboration, to give them stability and perspective. Dogmatic religious convictions, however, can also promote a monocultural perspective that can hinder positive intercultural sensitivity and multicultural competence. The phenomenon of the movement from a monocultural worldview to a multicultural one and the interplay of religious convictions during this process is what an intercultural educator needs to know and understand. Educators need this understanding to inform instructors’ and program directors’ content and pedagogy for best practice cross-cultural curricular decisions as they prepare and mentor the increasing number of students who study abroad. This thesis study attempts to advance the University’s missional and pedagogical concerns, specifically exploring the relationship between processing spirituality and religious beliefs and developing intercultural sensitivity and a multicultural worldview.

**Importance of the Project**

**Importance of the Project to the Researcher**

This project’s design attempts to speak to the holistic integration of the researcher’s worldview and religious convictions. The research question comes out of a strong conviction that our world needs peace and reconciliation and that God calls

---

believers to be activists in this pursuit. The researcher is earnest about working with BU-CAS toward its priority value to nurture students to be world-changers toward the goal of greater peace in our world.

As an educator and trainer, the researcher seeks to effectively nurture students to this end, facilitating and mentoring them through cross-cultural experiences. As a colleague to educators who are also designing courses and experiences to support the institution’s objectives and mission, the researcher can serve as a better informed consultant. As an intercultural trainer, the researcher can serve a spectrum of organizations that seek to develop their members and employees as interculturally competent contributors in their spheres of influence.

Finally, spiritual and religious intensification is an experience that the researcher personally confronts during those turbulent and potentially transforming cross-cultural experiences of alterity. By gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher will benefit in her own development as an effective interculturalist and leader in the field of intercultural education. Of greatest motivation, though, is the importance to more fully be in alterity with the one she knows as sacred. The terrible beauty is fascinating.

*Importance of the Project to the Immediate Context*

Bethel University’s College of Arts and Sciences (BU-CAS) has established a reputation among its peer institutions for excellence in undergraduate students’ international study experiences. BU-CAS Academic Affairs and the University president demonstrate significant commitment to this effort by sharing the financial burden for students to take advantage of a semester study abroad.
With the new Global Citizen general education requirement, departments as diverse as Anthropology and Chemistry offer or require cross-cultural experiences for their majors. From the growing support and offerings, student participation in both semester and three-week intensive programs at Bethel has grown, increasing 172 percent from 1996 to 2006, an increase greater than the national average of 144 percent. In the school year 2007-2008, 52 percent of Bethel’s CAS students studied abroad.

Faculty recognized the need and value of an intercultural experience to develop students’ global citizenry knowledge and skills and an increasing number of prospective students and parents are recognizing and asking about the destinations and quality of the University’s study abroad opportunities.

If BU-CAS wishes to meet its Global Citizenship objectives and maintain its reputation and position as a leader within the field of intercultural education, it needs to provide pedagogically sound and consistent opportunities that will support its graduates to both develop intercultural competencies and marketable skills, and develop and espouse the values of the institution. Bethel students are actively searching for opportunities that will allow them to live out biblical truths and transform culture in culturally sensitive and sustaining ways. In short, many Bethel students want to be world-changers and Christ-followers. The faculty and administration bear an institutional responsibility to provide students with the best possible experience and opportunity for growth and to assess that it accomplishes its stated objectives.

34 Open Doors 2006 Report.
Given the number of students studying abroad and the University’s resource commitment to meet its missional and curriculum goals, BU-CAS is investigating assessment evidence that informs it about how well it is meeting its objectives. This thesis offers Bethel University-CAS a pilot study about the worldview impact its study abroad program is having on its students and a pedagogical component that speaks specifically to the institution’s students who have strong spiritual and religious convictions.

**Importance of the Project to the Broader Context**

From 2001 to 2006, study abroad participation among United States students in higher education increased 20 percent\(^{36}\) and 144 percent since 1996.\(^{37}\) In the school year 2007-2008, the number of Americans studying abroad increased nearly 9 percent from the previous year.\(^{38}\) New federal funding initiatives to aid students’ expenses and institutions to measure the outcomes of these experiences are paralleling this increase in study abroad.\(^{39}\) In 2007 former United States Secretary of State Colin Powell gave the opening plenary session of the leading international conference for intercultural educators (NAFSA). Powell posited that our greatest weapon against terrorism is sending and welcoming students to study in cross-cultural environments.\(^{40}\)

\(^{36}\) Sutton.

\(^{37}\) Open Doors 2006 Report.

\(^{38}\) Open Doors 2009 Report.

\(^{39}\) Sutton.

\(^{40}\) Colin Powell, (opening plenary address, NAFSA Annual Conference and Expo, Minneapolis, MN, May 29, 2007).
In the past, most believed that by simply experiencing a cross-cultural exchange, sojourners increase their cross-cultural sensitivity and skills. Intercultural trainers are, however, strengthening their conviction that these experiences alone are not adequate to facilitate the deep learning that produces measurable intercultural competency. In addition, federal funding and institutions are demanding measurable learning according to the institutions’ respective stated outcomes.41

Today, intercultural educators consider it common knowledge that deliberate learning intervention must accompany cross-cultural experiences if institutions are to achieve their goals.42 A growing body of substantive qualitative and quantitative research in the field suggests that the key ways for this deep learning to happen are when students practice deliberate reflection to process the cross-cultural immersion and experience social support.

There is little research being done, however, to explore the role and impact of spiritual and religious intensification and processing during the cross-cultural experience, though beliefs and belief systems are at the core of the worldview development that is necessary for increased competence. This study would further the field’s knowledge and growing understanding of the dynamic of worldview development. It also seeks to inform trainers and cross-cultural sojourners about possible content and pedagogical considerations that support their objectives.


This study also has the potential to contribute to the training of more than just students who study abroad; it can apply to all cross-cultural sojourners for whatever reason they might engage with others who are distinctly different from themselves, domestically and internationally.

The altruistic importance of this project for the broader context is the hope that as the people of this world increase their engagement with alterity, they can do so with increased and sophisticated intercultural sensitivity and competence. This is a necessary competence and worldview needed to lead to collaborative and multicultural social innovations for greater peace in the world. This study can also add to the pedagogical knowledge of how to best support sojourners to develop toward this end, serving as a pilot for further investigation related to the processing of spirituality and religion and intercultural competence development.

**Research Methodology**

*Methodology*

The goal of this thesis is to explore and advance the knowledge of the relationship of processing spiritual and religious critical incidents experienced during cross-cultural immersions to that of the phenomenon of worldview shifts related to developing intercultural sensitivity and competence. In response to the problem and this curiosity, the researcher chose a postpositive methodology as the best way to gain the desired knowledge.\(^{43}\) The researcher employed a quasi-experimental quantitative design as its

---

strategy of inquiry\textsuperscript{44} and based it on a theory regarding the development of worldview orientations related to intercultural sensitivity and competence.\textsuperscript{45}

The ideal would have been to investigate the hypothesis using a mixed-method design based on a pragmatist philosophy to employ quantitative and qualitative methods to speak to one another about this integral dynamic. This is the task for further research.

\textit{Data}

\textbf{Primary Data}

Primary data included a closed-ended rating scale, the Intercultural Development Inventory, to determine a pre- and post-comparative measurement of both the nonrandomized control and treatment groups. In addition, a closed-ended, post-experience rating scale questionnaire in which the participants report some of the conditions of their experience and their experience of worldview intensification related to their spirituality and religion. Results from both tools were submitted to statistical analysis, testing for correlations.

\textbf{Secondary Data}

Scripture was the secondary data, exploring biblical and theological support for a developmental multicultural worldview and intercultural competence necessary to be an effective follower of Christ in culturally diverse settings. The researcher also sought knowledge expressed in literature, studies and conversations regarding the processing of spiritual intensification and intercultural competence from scholars in multiple

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{45} M. Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism.”
\end{flushright}
disciplines. Specifically, the researcher sought a consensus of explanations, definitions, criteria and assessment of spiritual intensification, the cross-cultural experience and intercultural competence. Finally, the researcher sought best practices related to interventions to support cross-cultural sojourners from the secondary data.

Project Overview

The first step was to develop a thorough grounding through study of the Bible, scholarly commentaries and leading voices across disciplines who seek Scripture as their authority. In addition, the researcher consulted sources from a multicultural collection for their hermeneutics of what biblical narratives say about the necessity for the development of a multicultural worldview and intercultural competence. The second step was to engage in a comparative dialogue to explore current scholarly literature and multicultural perspectives for theories and studies on the topics of spiritual intensification and the development of intercultural competence. The third step in the data collection was to conduct a pre- and post-measurement of the control group’s intercultural competence and gather post-experience self-reports about the conditions of the experience. The fourth step required the researcher to create and offer an intervention for the treatment group based on knowledge learned from literature, experience and intercultural educators. In order to support a social constructivist methodology, the researcher designed an intervention that coached the subjects during their cross-cultural sojourn as they experienced spiritual intensification and challenges to their worldview. The fifth step in the data collection was to conduct a pre- and post-measurement of the treatment groups’ intercultural competence and gather post-experience self-reports about the conditions of the experience. The sixth step in the data analysis was to statistically compare and interpret
the control and treatment group’s pre- and post-measurement change scores from the Intercultural Development Inventory and to test for correlations of those scores with the self-report conditions.

Subproblem Treatment

The first subproblem was to discover what the Bible’s meta-narrative teaches about spiritual intensification in a cross-cultural context. Data used were the Bible, reference sources and scholarly literature from multiple disciplines and diverse culture voices that speak to the Bible’s meta-narrative related to spiritual intensification and development of a multicultural worldview, as well as the researcher’s exegetical skills and hermeneutical methodology.

The second subproblem was to discover what the scholarly literature reveals about the phenomenon of relational spiritual intensification and its relationship to the development of worldviews toward a multicultural orientation. Data included scholarly literature that speaks to this subproblem.

The third subproblem was to determine through a literature review a theory and criteria for how to appropriately measure intercultural competence related to worldview. These three subproblems were the theoretical basis to support the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

For subproblems one, two and three, the researcher followed standards and conditions that speak to the specified theories and criteria. The researcher sought a multicultural and global collection of voices. Acceptable data was scholarly and cross-referenced by other leaders in the field. Data was analyzed, compared, evaluated and synthesized using sound scholarly principles of evaluation, as well as an earnest effort to
practice multicultural and integrated perspective-taking. The researcher also sought conversations with other scholars and practitioners to check the processing of the data, its interpretation and implications.

The fourth subproblem was to collect from study abroad undergraduate students comparative pre- and post-data from control and treatment groups that measured worldview change through demonstration of intercultural competence growth. In addition, the researcher collected post-data reports from the participants regarding the study abroad and intervention conditions during their study abroad. Data was derived from an unpolluted nonrandomized group of study abroad undergraduate students. Study abroad undergraduate students at BU-CAS reported their experiences directly and only to the researcher via the measurement tools.

To secure the data, BU-CAS’s Internal Review Board (IRB) for research using human subjects gave prior approval for this entire study. Also, all potential participants gave consent to participate in the research and to use the data for the limited purpose of this study.

The researcher also gained qualification to administer the primary measurement tool. No subject provided the fee for the use of the tool.

The data related to intercultural competence was collected prior to and after the subjects completed a semester study abroad. The intervention conditions and spiritual intensification data were gathered via a questionnaire written by the researcher based on the knowledge gained from subproblems one, two and three. The data related to spiritual intensification was collected after the subjects complete a study abroad. Data was collected using confidential identification in order to complete a comparative analysis.
The data was collected, analyzed and interpreted, looking for comparative pre- and post-test quantitative information that speaks to intercultural growth.

The fifth subproblem was to find or create and then offer a sound treatment that intervened in sojourners’ spiritual intensification experiences during a cross-cultural experience. The same standards and conditions sought for subproblems one, two and three were sought for this fifth subproblem.

The sixth subproblem was to study and interpret the data with hopes to further the field’s understanding of the phenomenon of the processing of spiritual intensification during a study abroad and its relationship to worldview development and intercultural competence growth. Data analysis needed was (1) a quantitative comparative analysis of the control and treatment groups’ average change scores, and (2) its statistical significance. The purpose of the comparison of the control and treatment groups’ intercultural worldview measurements was to explore the relationship of the intervention.
CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL SUPPORT

FOR MULTICULTURAL WORLDVIEW DEVELOPMENT

The Call: A Light to All Nations

The Bible offers its readers a paradigmatic story of people going on journeys in which sojourners cross into other lands to dwell and interact with people who have distinctly different cultures and worldviews. God’s people are often strangers and foreigners in strange lands. For the sake of survival, all of these sojourners had to learn how to live and thrive in the tension between adapting to foreign ways while also living out what they believed were God’s essential values and principles.

This pattern begins in the Old Testament when God commanded Abram and Sarai to “go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” Why? So that God could “make of you a great nation and I will bless you . . . so that you will be a blessing . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3). Another sojourner story is Jacob’s son Joseph taken by force into Egypt. Esther and then Daniel were also taken from Israel into Persian captivity. Amazingly, these foreigners became great leaders in these strange lands for the welfare of the nations—both the strangers’ and their own.
The sojourner paradigm continues into the New Testament. In Jesus last words, he commissioned his followers to go out and teach and disciple all people about the Good News (Mt. 28:16-20). The Good News spoken of is that Jesus is God’s son, and that he died to pay the price for all of humanity’s sin, thereby giving hope and peace for today and tomorrow. Jesus’ last command implies two things. First, his commission makes no distinctions about whom believers are to tell and disciple, or which believers are to do the telling. He tells all believers and followers to be light to all people, tribes and nations, teaching and discipling all people about the Good News. Believers reward will come on the Day of Judgment when before God’s throne they will sing a new song, saying of Jesus, “You were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9).

Second, Jesus’ last words instruct his followers to “go out” and be lights to all nations. Implicit in this directive is that his followers are required to engage deeply with foreigners and strangers. To make disciples of all nations (panta ta ethnè), believers must “come alongside the other to seek an encounter together with the truth.” In other words, God’s people are called to sojourn across borders to explore life with others different from themselves and to do so with a commitment to Jesus Christ’s reconciling power to love one another and God. This cannot occur without deep conversations born out of relationships that uncover the beliefs, feelings and values imbedded in people’s worldviews. While transformation does occur as a direct result of effective preaching of the Good News and without the benefit of close relationships, more often

---

transformational change happens through God’s spirit working in the context of people’s trusting relationships. The discipleship experience is where two people share with one another about their deep epistemological worldviews that transformation occurs.

These transformative relationships and conversations, however, can create worldview dissonance in which people filter and test the differences between worldviews, and then make a decision about whether or not to shift the elements of their own worldview. Scripture records these experiences of worldview dissonance as the disciples followed Jesus’ command (Mt. 28:16-20). In the Church’s early days, Peter and Paul traveled to different parts of the region doing what Jesus told them to do. Their journeys are rich with cross-cultural transforming worldview events. As they discipled people from multiple ethnic and religious origins, they had to reconsider many norms and assumptions that they held. They had to shift their worldview about the forms and rituals that authenticated what it meant to be true followers of Jesus. Even today, when people hear the Good News it can provoke worldview dissonance and hearers must decide whether or not to make an epistemological shift in order to embrace the transforming knowledge and power of the Good News.

Perhaps this transformational phenomenon of a worldview shift is why Jesus told Nicodemus that, metaphorically, he must be reborn, referring in part to being born anew to a different way of making sense of the world from a spiritual perspective (John 3). Paul also speaks to this worldview phenomenon when he tells the believers in Rome that they should “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).
What is the will of God? It is God’s prescribed and perfect way of making sense of life and living life with others in peaceful and just ways. It could be said that this is God’s worldview and as humans come to know God, they come to know and act according to God’s worldview. This experience, though, is one of confronting the differences between God and themselves as people living in culturally influenced contexts. When people are confronted with things different from their norms, they test the differences. In the Romans 12, this is what Paul charges the Roman believers to do with their shifting worldview as followers of Jesus—“discern what is the will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

For the majority of the sojourners written about in the Bible, their journeys were fraught with hardships. Today, the journey to explore God’s worldview as it is lived out in the diverse cultural contexts of every tribe and nation can be fascinating as sojourners travel to exotic lands or live with others who travel to their land. These journeys also bring their own form of worldview challenges and risks resulting from the dissonance that occurs while on the journey, as was true for the biblical characters. Through these journeys, sojourners have the potential to develop worldviews with a capacity to see and make sense of life from different cultural perspectives while still being able to differentiate between other worldviews and their own. This way of making sense of life’s experiences and the differences of other worldviews is known as an “ethnorelative” or “multicultural” worldview “orientation.”

When these journeys of seeking after truth take place between two people from two different lands, cultures and ethnic backgrounds, the challenges and risks become great because the differences between the two people are greater. The temptation is to
avoid the risk to engage in deep and mutual relationships with people who are different from oneself or to deny, defend or minimize the differences and not get to a place of understanding and trust. If believers are to truly be a light to people in all cultures and all worldviews, however, then they must develop the skills to sensitively and effectively engage in relationships with people who are different from themselves. This is the experience of “alterity.” How to become the person who sensitively and effectively engages in alterity is the challenge. The byproduct of successfully embracing this challenge is intercultural sensitivity and competence.

Scripture narrates the outcomes when biblical characters confront the challenges and risks of alterity. Though not always the explicit or pronounced lesson taught in these narratives, what is observed is the characters’ development as interculturally sensitive people. It narrates how these women and men are confronted with the different cultures in which they find themselves, recognize what they know as the norm and then reconsider their own culturally influenced belief system and worldview. As foreigners in strange lands, they had to have made radical worldview shifts to have made the positive and powerful impact that Scripture records.

As a subtext to the overarching motifs of God’s desire for reconciliation and the role of God’s people in that task, the Bible offers its readers instructive and developmental narratives about the spiritual intensification that occurs during these experiences of alterity and the necessary worldview shift that God seems to require of the people for whom God wants to shine as lights toward the hope of reconciliation. This is the vocational call and experience of old and of today. Increasingly, the church today
requires interculturally sensitive and competent people in order to continue to carry out its mission.

An interculturally sensitive person is one who can see and understand another’s perspectives. An interculturally competent person can adapt his or her feelings, behavior and thinking to that of the other person so as to be able to be an effective friend, advisor or leader to someone from another worldview. In Scripture, biblical characters model these intercultural competencies. They developed perspectives, attitudes, empathy and understanding so as to be able to connect in mutual and positive ways with people very different from themselves. Through the development of intercultural competencies, these people also developed a multicultural worldview. The result is that when these biblical characters engaged in relationships with others, both were transformed.

For example, Egypt’s pharaoh and Babylon’s King Nebuchadnessar acknowledged Yahweh Elohim as a powerful and sovereign god. They allowed Joseph and Daniel to apply God’s precepts and values in their leadership roles and thereby influenced society’s economic and social welfare. Jesus also challenged and crossed multiple cultural boundaries and taboos as he embraced people whom others would not. He modeled for his disciples what God’s call to be a light to all people truly meant. Peter and Paul persuaded the Jewish leaders to reconsider the ethnic impact of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The result is that Gentiles were eventually considered equal before God and partners in Jesus’ call.

Scripture supports the claim that to follow the call to be a light to all nations and a discipler of the Good News, believers today are also called to embrace the challenge to develop a multicultural worldview. This explanation is the catalyst and purpose of this
research, looking for ways to support the Believer’s development to be an effective and careful stranger in a foreign land, even if that stranger is in one’s own agora in their own land.

**The Problem: An Ethnocentric Worldview and Competence**

One of the central problems when believers try to be a light to other nations is the challenge to respectfully understand and embrace differences of other ethnic and racial peoples and groups. This is not just a problem for believers. This is a human condition. People have the proclivity toward knowing, valuing and promoting their own understanding of truth from the single cultural perspective from which it was developed.

This was the problem described in Acts (10-12) and Paul’s epistles (Romans 6-15, 1 Cor. 8-11:1) as Paul, Peter and the Jerusalem Council worked through the conflict of accepting non-Jews as true believers of Jesus without requiring them to follow the cultural traditions of male circumcision and eating kosher meat. Even though they believed in the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection, they struggled to understand the situation from a perspective other than their single cultural perspective that was cultivated in their Judaic worldview. It was not until Paul and Peter experienced spiritual and worldview tension as they engaged with those of different ethnic groups that they faced the challenge to reconsider and then reconfigure their understanding of their beliefs, belief system, mission and the truth of God’s offering of salvation to all people and nations.

The conflict for first century Jews was their socially formed and culturally influenced worldview that told them that there were certain beliefs, principles, values, rituals and traditions that authenticated one’s membership as a follower of God, be that
person Jew or Gentile, Samaritan or Greek, Roman or Syrophoenician. They experienced worldview dissonance that eventually helped them to more clearly understand the ethnic impact of God’s global vision and Jesus’ death and resurrection. To varying degrees, for example, Paul and Peter came to the conviction that it was no longer Jewish religious practice that saved people from the punishment of sin.

This inclination to test and filter life’s experience from one culturally influenced lens is known as an “ethnocentric worldview orientation.” Most people contend with this inherent way of dealing with differences. The question is what difference does God’s call mean to believers who have this ethnocentric inclination. More specifically, how do believers effectively communicate and relate in contextually relevant ways with someone from another culture in order to do what Jesus commanded believers to do? Understanding and imitating Jesus and how and why he lived his life as he did, not the variant cultural forms of religiosity, is one of the historic challenges and goals of the Christian conviction. Believers struggle together for what it means and how it looks to seek after the kingdom of God with fellow seekers of all ethnic groups and worldviews and in particular cultural contexts that is true to God’s worldview. Paul and Peter learned that to do this in culturally relevant ways meant to welcome the stranger and the foreigner as Jesus did. Jesus sought out the strangers and welcomed them.

An Answer: Welcoming the Other

The Bible shows that when humans choose to “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you,” as Paul commands the Romans (15:7), an ethnocentric worldview can expand toward an ethnorelative orientation. The inclination to welcome the stranger and foreigner, however, is not an easy task or simply a gesture of kindness. To develop the
heart, mind and behavioral skills to fully welcome others as Christ did often comes as a result of an experience with differences that creates tension within oneself. God’s grace and mercy are the foundation and power by which humans can fully welcome one another. To welcome the stranger as Christ did is the command and challenge to which believers are still called today.

What does this “welcome” look like? Volf offers the metaphor of embracing the other in contrast to excluding. To explain the manner and mindset in which this is done, Volf says,

_The will to give ourselves to others and “welcome” them, to readjust our identities to make space for them is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace precedes any “truth” about others and any construction of their “justice.”_ ^47

Humankind is rarely willing to embrace different people with different worldviews in order to enrich the perspectives and practices needed for peace and reconciliation. Evidence of this can be derived from the greatest hours of segregation in the United States: Sunday morning. One would think that this time of worship, admonishment and encouragement would be the time when believers would recognize the unity that all people have in Christ. One would expect believers to embrace all people from every tribe and nation in anticipation of Jesus’ return when he makes just all that is unjust.

Fortunately, Scripture presents us with a vision for what we are called to pursue as sojourners. The Apostle John in Revelation relates the details from his prophetic dreams. On the Day of Judgment he says he witnessed before God’s throne “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and

languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . . and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9-10).

Despite the increase of multicultural communities living in close proximity together, this experience of a multitude of multiple ethnic groups in the same room worshipping together is a rare experience for many churches and denominations. Though the Sunday morning experience in America is changing, it is still a time when many believers are the least welcoming of people who are distinctly different from their own ethnic and racial backgrounds. Rather, believers continue to seek to be with those who are most like themselves ethnically, not seeking the fullness of God through relationships with people whose perspectives are different from their own.

Volf contrasts this with his explanation of what it means to embrace what he defines as a multicultural worldview orientation and affective, behavioral and cognitive competencies to live from this orientation. Believers, he writes, are called to embrace all nations, acknowledging the Lord God as the provider and grace-giver to all who will join in the dialogue. Today, these nations are across the seas and, in this increasingly interconnected world, they also are here in the daily exchanges of living life in the marketplace, neighborhoods, places of worship and homes, in both the city and rural areas. The problem, then, is how to challenge and support believers to welcome the will to embrace, to expand and make space for the differences of others and to risk the discomfort and uncertainty that this requires. Scripture provides the injunction and the models for this growth toward a multicultural worldview and life. Like the characters from Scripture’s narratives, one way to challenge and support this worldview
development is through bold, risk-taking sojourns to lands that are foreign and strange to one’s cultural norms.

**Old Testament Narratives of Developing a Multicultural Worldview**

*Abram’s and Sarai’s Sojourn to Develop Intercultural Competence*

God commanded Abram to “go out from your country and your kindred,” and so he took his wife Sarai and nephew and he went (Gen. 12:1-3). Why could Abram and Sarai not have stayed home in the comfort of their kindred to receive this promise and blessing? God clearly thought it most effective to uproot them from what was comfortable and familiar, physically and epistemologically, so that they had to engage with those who experienced and made sense of life in distinctly different ways. Abram “chose to leave,” as Volf points out. “The courage to break his cultural and familial ties and abandon the gods of his ancestors (Joshua 24:2) out of allegiance to a God of all families and all cultures was the original Abrahamic revolution.”48 By being strangers in strange lands, this faithful couple finds different perspectives of how to understand what it might mean to follow a single transcendent god who creates and loves all people.

Abram and Sarai’s departure from what was familiar was no vacation, though the tour guide knew well the itinerary and the goal. Volf argues that this sojourn was meant to shift, even upset, the perspective and understanding of what it means to have complete allegiance to the family of God, “not to any particular country, culture, or family with their local deities. The oneness of God implies God’s universality, and universality

---

48 Ibid., 39.
entails transcendence with respect to any given culture.” To learn this lesson required the couple to develop the skills of perspective-taking and understanding people of other cultures and their ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. The outcome was that Abram and Sarai grew in their understanding of God in all fullness, majesty and mystery.

When Abram and Sarai entered Egypt to get food during the famine, Abram assessed the cultural norms and conditions and determined it best to tell the Egyptians a half-truth about his beautiful wife, who by lineage was also his sister (Gen. 12:10-16). She is my sister, he tells them. “So that it may go well for me,” he reasons to Sarai (12:14). Abram assesses the situation from an ethnocentric perspective. He may have thought this was assimilating into culture, and he may very well have been right that the Egyptians would have killed him in order for Pharaoh to have beautiful Sarai for his own.

Whatever the case, the couple was experiencing a critical incident of cultural proportions. They were trying to discern the tension of what they knew was right and what they observed in their cross-cultural experience in Egypt. This was an experience of worldview tension, also referred to as “intensification.” They knew, as heard in Abram’s rationalizing, that they were compromising their loyalty to what they seemed to know was God’s best for them to what they observed as different ways of behaving and thinking. They were trying to interpret the culture from a single cultural lens.

Fortunately, God intervened. Pharaoh said to Abram, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go” (12:18-20). The couple did not seem to know how to accurately think or behave in a way that accepted and adapted to the Egyptian cultural perspective while at the same time

49 Ibid.
skillfully negotiate and strategize their way safely through the country without putting Sarai in such a position and compromising God’s precepts. Abram did not have the intercultural competence to be in another culture without being absorbed by the ways that were not God’s ways. He did not yet have the cross-cultural competence of self-advocacy while respectfully sojourning through the unfamiliar culture. Abram was trying to adapt without being able to differentiate between the principles he wished to retain and what he assumed would be the Egyptians’ values and subsequent behavior, which was to steal another’s wife.

To develop these intercultural competencies was the first step for Abram and Sarai. These competencies come from a worldview belief of what it means to be from the tribe of Yahweh Elohim and how to peacefully negotiate in the multicultural settings in which Abraham and Sarah found themselves. Savvy cross-cultural sojourners must know their own cultural and worldview origins to be able to recognize the complexities of another culture in order to stay loyal to God’s family and the call to “go” to this multicultural world. “At the very core of our Christian identity,” observes Volf, “lies an all-encompassing change of loyalty, from a given culture with its gods to the God of all cultures.”50

In the end, God did bless Abraham and Sarah with the nation that would be the light to all other nations. God changed Abram’s name, which means “exalted Father,” to Abraham, meaning “father of multitudes,” that “all peoples on earth will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). With this change of name, Parrett and Kang argue, God clearly wants all to know that “even in choosing one nation to be uniquely his, God’s heart is unwaveringly

50 Ibid., 40.
concerned with all the nations and peoples of the earth.”\textsuperscript{51} Abraham and Sarah’s multitudes of descendents were to be a blessing to “Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female,” Paul tells the Galatians. “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring” (Gal. 3:28). God’s family is not identified ethnically, racially, economically, politically or culturally. God does call believers, though, to embrace the realities of differences and similarities. This ancient couple’s departure from what was familiar to the unfamiliar was to learn God’s global intention. They were not excluded, however, from the necessary experiences of cultural dissonance and worldview dilemma.

\textit{Joseph Grows in Godly Wisdom Through Alterity}

Unlike Abram and Sarai, Jacob’s son Joseph offers a multicultural worldview model for how to be both a stranger in a strange land and to be a host to strangers in one’s own land. Genesis 36-50 tells the story of Joseph’s brothers selling him into slavery, his rise to power in a foreign land for the well-being of Egyptian people and culture and his show of mercy and reconciliation toward the very brothers who abandoned him. Kort argues that Joseph, who comes from the culture of the children of Abraham, shows Bible readers how to make this cultural adjustment with wisdom and maturity.\textsuperscript{52} What readers can observe in the narrative is Joseph developing into a wise and multicultural person. He comes to know God better through his developing perspectives and Egyptians better through his developing skills. He chose to engage intimately with the people of a foreign


\textsuperscript{52} Wesley A. Kort, “Christianity, Literature, and Cultural Conflict in American.” Special Issue, \textit{Christianity and Literature} 56, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 465.
culture and also differentiate and hold onto what he knew were God’s principles and values. Joseph’s story is an example of alterity and multicultural worldview development.

Imagine Joseph’s struggles as he compared how his own brothers dealt with him to how the foreign and “pagan” rulers of Egypt showed him mercy as a slave, recognized his potential and raised him up to powerful positions of influence and trust. He must have been under great distress as he tried to make sense of the values, beliefs and practices—the worldview—of his family’s tribe. He certainly had reason to completely dismiss any good that could come out of the culture of Abraham and Jacob. Yet these kinds of worldview challenges and pain seem to be what God continues to require of God’s people to teach them how to be Children of God, a light to all nations and a reconciler of people to one another and God.

Unlike Abram, Joseph carefully learned the complexity of Egyptian culture without dismissing completely his own worldview identity. “He never forgets, despite his success and the injuries he suffered in his family of origin,” explains Kort, “that he is a full member of the family [of Abraham and Jacob].”53 Joseph thereby becomes a “marginal” person, a person who has an identity that combines differing cultures. Joseph is able to affectively, behaviorally and cognitively shift from one culture to another without being completely of any one culture. His worldview orientation develops to that of being multicultural, and becomes quite skilled at it so that when his brothers arrived in Egypt, they did not recognize Joseph as being a foreigner like them, but as a great and wise Egyptian ruler.

53 Ibid., 464.
Kort goes on to say, “While we do not have the details of how this works out, we have in a broadly sketched form, a pattern indicating an alternative of the two, clear paths of rejection or avoidance of differing culture, on the one side, and conformity to or assimilation by a differing culture on the other.”

Joseph learned to engage deeply with the people of Egypt, learning their ways and doing good for the society’s economic and political welfare. Yet he also does not fall into the traps of the Egyptian culture. He learned to recognize, critically evaluate and negotiate the Egyptian cultural norms from God’s principles and values. Despite his dysfunctional family situation, he must have also learned well what it was to understand life from God’s worldview, ways that were “above” the culture from which he came. As Kraft says, God’s ways are both in culture and “supraculture.”

Amazingly, despite how poorly his brothers treated him when they left him in a lions’ pit and then sold him as a slave, Joseph is also able to forgive, empathize and consider life from his family’s perspective. Having the skill to consider a situation from multiple perspectives, Joseph was able to provide food and comfort to his elderly father and undeserving brothers. He learned how to embrace the other and show hospitality. He learned to value the people and adapt to the ways of his culture of origin and those of another.

Joseph’s story offers a model for all followers of Yahweh Elohim. Kort describes the profound phenomenon of what happens when people engage in alterity. Like Volf, Kort emphasizes that Scripture teaches the wisdom of embracing rather than excluding people, cultures and nations that are different from one’s own. “We could say that

54 Ibid.
55 Kraft, Christianity in Culture, 128.
particularity and exclusivity are not part of the wisdom movement,” explains Kort.
“Stress is not placed on Israel as a particular people with particular religious practices, structures, and shrines that set them at a distance from and in opposition to other people. This does not mean assimilation.” Kort emphasizes that we are to continue to fear Yahweh, as this is fundamental to wisdom. Still, “fear of Yahweh does not mean separation from and antagonism toward peoples with differing cultural and religious identities,” Kort qualifies. “The wisdom paradigm regarding cultural difference and conflict is to place the wise person somewhere between assimilation and rejection, between a compromising accommodation and exclusivity.” As a believer, learning when to accommodate and when to exclude is a crucial intercultural competency. It is the skill of negotiating reality.

Christians who claim the Bible as an authority in their lives, argues Kort, should learn from Joseph that “affirming other cultures and religions is part of biblical witness.” Christians do not need to fear nor exclude differing worldviews nor politically polarize them. As a wise national leader in Egypt, Joseph critically embraced and discerned the foreign culture while he also realized the failings of his “first” culture, following God’s guidelines for righteousness. He recognized God’s presence in the cultures and above the cultures.

Clearly, Joseph experienced many critical challenges to his worldview and cultural norms. Rather than denying, defending or minimizing these differences, Joseph

---

56 Kort, 466.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 472.
seemed to be able to enrich and deepen his understanding of both God and people through developing his capacity to live in the ambiguity “between a compromising accommodation and exclusivity.”\textsuperscript{59} He seemed to be able to look for a godly worldview. He became skilled at becoming culturally aware of the similarities and differences in people and, perhaps, the ways that God is so very different and similar from humans. Kort explains,

\begin{quote}
If I am to have a relation with God, I need to take difference seriously into account. If I do not appreciate difference in my relations to other people, if I do not affirm people not only despite but also because of difference, I am ill-prepared even to think of what it might be like to have a relation to God.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

Engaging and growing one’s capacity to recognize, embrace and wisely develop one’s worldview is integral to spiritual development and leads to knowing God in a full and mysterious way through embracing differentness. This is the profound phenomenon of the spiritual cross-cultural sojourn to seek the sacred, and at the same time, peace with others.

\textit{Esther and Daniel Discern What Is Unimportant}

Through the stories of Esther’s and Daniel’s enslavements in Babylon, the Old Testament narrative continues to instruct its readers about this phenomenon of worldview development through cultural dissonance. Both characters did as the prophet Jeremiah instructed them to do and devoted themselves to the welfare of the city of their exile and their new foreign culture. God instructed them to “plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives . . . and give your daughters in marriage. . . . But seek the welfare of the city

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 466.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 477.
where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jer. 29:4-7). At the same time, they resolved to not compromise what they knew to be God’s instruction regarding what it means to be righteous. To be able to balance the tension of accommodating and excluding, one must be a student of culture, appreciating and understanding the differences. As seemed to be true of Joseph, Esther and Daniel also learned how to both embrace and critically evaluate the culture of the people with whom they were living as strangers. One cannot follow a command such as Jeremiah’s by denying the reality of the influence of culture and cultural difference or by simply tolerating the differences rather than seeking to understand them. Rather, Esther and Daniel demonstrated intercultural competence. God, again, sent people on a cross-cultural sojourn, out of what was familiar to the unfamiliar to teach them what it means to truly follow Yahweh. They lived in the cross-cultural tension between compromising accommodation and exclusivity.

Like Joseph, the result was that as foreigners Esther and Daniel rose to positions of political influence, persuading their earthly kings to recognize the God of the Israelites and the precepts of God’s ways. These developing leaders were assertive in learning about the culture in which they lived and were also aware of their own culture and holding fast to its fundamental beliefs with a growing awareness of God’s principles and values that rose above culture.

Daniel and Esther devoted themselves to learn about the foreign culture through study and cultural mentors. Scripture records that Esther’s uncle Mordecai learned the ways of Ahasuerus’ kingdom, taught these ways to Esther and adapted in such a way that King Ahasuerus “loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in
his sight” (Esther 2:2-23). As the story of Queen Esther unfolds, she chooses to risk revealing her ethnic origin and her life by speaking to King Ahasuerus on behalf of her people. In hopes of persuading him not to slaughter all the Jews in the land, Esther successfully knew what kind of appeals would persuade King Ahasuerus to abolish the creed that commanded such an atrocity (Esther 7:1-6). Esther risked her life to save her fellow Jews. The happy ending of this story is due, in part, to her embracing the people and culture in the foreign land and holding fast to God’s ways. She had learned what principles and values were important to live by and what cultural norms were unimportant, both in her own Jewish culture and that of Babylon’s.

Daniel also willingly studied his captor’s culture (Dan. 1:3-4). In fact, Daniel and his close companions became such experts in Babylonian religion, wisdom literature and science that those across the empire knew and revered them. Scripture tells its readers that “in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, [King Nebuchadnessar] found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom” (1:20). Daniel is an excellent model for how to adapt to a culture other than one’s own, selectively compromising the accommodations required of him. Daniel’s devotion to study this foreign culture gave him credibility as a cultural insider and enabled him to significantly and repeatedly influence the king and all who dwelt in the kingdom.

An example of Daniel and his companions adapting to the culture is when the king commanded that he and the other students eat a diet of rich foods and wine and unkosher meat. Daniel knew God’s dietary commands not to eat such meat. He also knew that if he refused to eat this diet, he would be killed and so would his Babylonian
supervisor. He proposed an accommodating compromise, an alternative. He proposed that he and his companions would eat only vegetables, not the meat, and drink only water, not the wine. Then they could test the Israelite students’ health to that of those who did eat the rich diet. Scripture says that “God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight” (1:9) of his supervisor and God blessed them for their creative faithfulness to Mosaic law. They won the competition and were allowed to continue with the accommodated and exclusive diet that did not compromise those symbols that shined a light on them as God’s people.

Another example of cultural adaptation is what Peterson describes as “discerning acceptable meaning despite a seemingly unacceptable form.”61 King Nebuchadnessar unreasonably demanded that all the sorcerers, wizards and wise men in the kingdom be slain if they could not tell his dream and what it meant. Daniel “replied with prudence and discretion” (2:14). He persuaded the captain who was supposed to kill them to give them some extra time. For what? Daniel and his companions set themselves to earnestly fast and pray to God for a miraculous revealing of the dream and an interpretation. God honored their prayers and revealed to Daniel the dream and its meaning.

After Daniel told the king his dream and wise interpretation, the king lit incense and offerings for Daniel, falling prostrate before him and worshipping him for this great miracle and wisdom. Daniel knew that worshipping anyone other than God was idolatry and against God’s core commands. Yet Daniel also understood the culture well enough that though the king’s form of worship was against God’s ways, from the king’s cultural

---

perspective he meant to honor Daniel’s god, not to worship Daniel as another god.62

“Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery,” exclaimed the king (2:47).

Daniel was able to approach the situation in culturally sensitive ways and adapt true meaning to an act that would appear idolatrous in his own cultural setting. A monocultural worldview might consider this competence of distinguishing between form and meaning as a strange ethical virtue. On the other hand, a person with a multicultural worldview would understand the utmost importance of carefully contemplating a range of perspectives and options for how to respond to what would be a norm in one culture and not in another.

The story of Daniel also clearly shows that he and his companions learned about what not to compromise while living in the Babylonian culture. The famous story of Daniel and his companions refusing to bow before idols, being thrown into the fiery furnace and saved from its flames speaks to their ability to discern and be steadfast about the important things of God’s worldview (Dan. 3). In another instance, Daniel again refused to bow before both idols and man and was thrown into the lions’ den for disobeying the king’s decree, and God again saved Daniel. The king glorified Daniel’s God for it, proclaiming to the whole kingdom, “In all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel for he is the living God” (Dan. 6:26). The result for Daniel was that he “prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (6:28).

Daniel and his companions knew what of God’s laws not to compromise, and God honored these faithful men and was also glorified for the impressive display of power.

62 Ibid.
These stories demonstrate “Daniel’s willingness to pay any price in order to maintain his ethical and theological integrity,” argues Petersen. “There must always be limits to one’s cultural adaptation, regardless of the culture and one’s desire to be ‘sensitive.’” They identified what was unimportant and what was important. What were important were God’s core commands, precepts and values. These were the things about which they were exclusive.

*Prayer in the Multicultural Worldview*

One of the sojourners’ challenges in the experience of developing intercultural competence is learning how to negotiate the tension of compromising accommodations and exclusivity. Joseph and Daniel are excellent models of living out this tension, but how did they develop the perspectives and skill to do it? While the story of Joseph does not offer clear hints, Daniel’s story repeatedly gives direction: seek God through prayer and fasting.

Sojourners must ethically sort through the important from the unimportant. From a multicultural worldview, however, decisions about how to respond to the tensions of cultural differences can often appear as “strange virtues.” Throughout his life, Daniel regularly sought God’s perspective on this tension through fasting and prayer to discern what was God’s truth as compared to what the Babylonian culture taught, believed and lived out (6:10; 9:20-21). Several times in the book of Daniel, qualifying statements are

---

63 Ibid., 127.

made about Daniel’s life of prayer and fasting. One of these instances is in the story of Daniel being rescued from the lion’s den. The writer points out that Daniel had a habit of praying.

The story told is that Daniel had just received the signed document from the king that he knew would determine his fate, from an earthly perspective. The Babylonian presidents and satraps were jealous about Daniel’s favor and position with the king and wanted to get this Israelite out of their way. They persuaded the king to make a decree that they knew Daniel would be forced to disobey because of its “connection with the law of God” (6:5). The document declared that all who “make petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king” would be sent to the lions’ den (6:7). This decree and those who plotted against Daniel, however, would not stop him from his regular habit of prayer. They knew that he regularly prayed and only to the god of the Israelites. In fact, with the decree in his hand Daniel “went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously” (6:10, emphasis added).

While this story illustrates many things, it clearly demonstrates Daniel’s known habit of prayer. Surely Daniel developed ears to listen to God’s wisdom during this daily habit of prayer. One could imagine that it was in these times that God made clear to him how to negotiate the tensions of cultural norms and God’s precepts. One prayer that does let readers in on how God spoke to Daniel was a prayer of praise for revealing to Daniel the king’s dream:

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever;  
To whom belong wisdom and might.  
He changes times and seasons;  
He removes kings and sets up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 
He reveals deep and hidden things; 
He knows what is in the darkness, 
And the light dwells with him. (Daniel 2:20-22)

God did reveal deep and hidden things to Daniel and Daniel acknowledged the source of that wisdom and might.

Daniel was able to differentiate between what was cultural and what was God’s truth separate from culture through prayer and fasting, regularly contemplating and listening to God’s wisdom. At times Daniel’s response seemed strange from both Babylonian and Jewish culture. Yet the story clearly shows that God honored Daniel’s cultural adaptation, living in this tension of accommodating and excluding and praying for God’s wisdom in that tension. Cross-cultural sojourners can learn the same from this model, to pray and to recognize that sometimes the outcome may seem strange to some depending on the cultural context and worldview orientation.

Joseph, Esther and Daniel demonstrated godly wisdom and followed the call to be a light to all nations, even while in captivity. They rose to positions of influence by learning and understanding the ways of the cultures in which they found themselves, embracing its beauty and good and to think and behave, as Daniel is described, “with prudence and discretion” (Dan. 2:14). They did this while still advocating for what they discerned as God’s ways. They were able, as Crouch concludes, to learn how to negotiate and discern the “importance of knowing what’s unimportant.”

---

A Multicultural Worldview Required to Expand God’s Global Vision

God’s global intention and vocation that God’s children go out to be a light to the nations continues in the stories and characters of the New Testament. The narratives make it emphatically clear that Jesus came, ministered and died for every people, tribe and nation, expanding the audience of who should light the path toward Yahweh Elohim. The New Testament narrative again shows the development of a multicultural worldview shift in its characters as they engaged in alterity. Jesus, Peter and Paul most clearly portray the vital role of these journeys and the multicultural worldview that came from their sojourns. They too experienced intense cross-cultural challenges and willingly took risks to cross over the boundaries of cultural norms. The result was the expansion of who was called to obey the command to be lights to all nations.

Jesus’ Multicultural Worldview Development

Jesus was the radical and revolutionary catalyst needed to jolt the Jews from the slavery of their law-driven, culture-bound religion and reacquaint them with the multicultural family of God and their mission as a light to all. Jesus is the ultimate reconciler and the light.66 The most direct and single command that Jesus continued to teach, as taught since Abraham, is that God’s followers are to love God and others as they would love themselves (Mt. 22:37-39, Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27). Who are the “others”? This includes all people of all nations, socio-economic classes, sex, religions, race and ethnicities. In the end, Jesus made no distinctions.

66 Parrett and Kang, 71.
Jesus boldly, yet with prudence and discernment, went into the lands, community places and homes of those who followed distinctly different worldviews, theologies and lifestyles. He listened and learned from the Roman and Gentile centurion from Capernaum, discovering that he was a friend to the Jews, having built a synagogue for them\(^\text{67}\) (Mt. 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-11). Jesus asked about the lives and the beliefs of the two blind men (Mt. 9:20-21), the man with the withered hand (Mt. 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:6-10), the leper and Samaritan (Luke 17:11-19), the despised tax-collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:2-19) and the earnestly searching Pharisee, Nicodemus (John 3:1-27). Jesus embraced with forgiveness and acceptance the woman who was a known sinner, who bravely went to the Pharisees’ home where Jesus was eating and anointed Jesus with expensive perfume (Luke 7:37). Jesus healed their bodies and their souls, even those without a conviction of being an orthodox follower of God.

Jesus modeled what it means to be a peacemaker to people of all beliefs (Mt. 5:9; 16:16, Mark 1:1, Luke 3:38). Curiously and perhaps unexpectedly, the Gospel writers made note about the impact of a Roman centurion, a Samaritan, and a Syrophoenician. From all appearances, these non-Jews and their commensurate understanding and faith in God expanded Jesus’ own understanding of God’s mission for him, and for believers today.

Like Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Daniel and Esther, Jesus’ cross-cultural sojourn was not without pain. He, too, was challenged to expand his beliefs and mission to include the Gentiles. Initially, from the pattern of his interactions and developing ministry, Jesus directed the majority of his attention to Jews. But through his sojourns

and encounters with non-Jews who honored him with intense faith, he responded and expanded his ministry and mission to welcome Gentiles as well. It was only after Jesus embraced a pagan Gentile woman that the Jewish leaders became serious about finding a way to put a stop to Jesus’ expanding understanding to obey God’s inclusion mission to “go” and welcome strangers from every tribe and nation.

The Samaritan Woman

The Apostle John offers an often-discussed example of Jesus demonstrating the competency that comes from a multicultural worldview (John 4:1-43). Jesus crosses over gender, ethnic and religious barriers. He crosses the border into Samaria and finds the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well in the middle of the day. Jesus’ Jewish culture would have instructed him that this behavior breaks the norms of both the Samaritan woman and Jesus, and his disciples pointed out his radical behavior.

The Jews despised this woman for several reasons. They despised her because of her mixed ethnicity as a Samaritan, for the historical wrongs the Samaritans had done to the Jews and for the Samaritan’s incorrect theology about where to worship. Samaritans also despised this woman because of her immoral life, and so she draws her water in the heat of the middle of the day to avoid fellowship with even her own people. Making several unlikely choices that perplexed his disciples, Jesus engages in conversation with this woman about these barriers and stereotypes while drinking cool water from Jacob’s well, a well that was a symbol of religious and personal strife for both the Samaritan and the Jew. As if ignoring these barriers was not enough, this Jewish man and his disciples

---

stayed for two additional days to fellowship with this Samaritan woman and her community (4:43), the so-called blasphemers of his day. Jesus’ actions, dialogue and manner clearly exhibit alterity in its best form.

Still, there is more that this story can teach about the effect of a multicultural worldview and the behavior that follows it. When cultural and religious barriers of this sort are broken down, explains Gundry-Volf, “the story testifies that the gift of eternal life is experienced in the fellowship of those once estranged but now reconciled, and that fellowship is an integral part of the gift itself.” What is key here is Jesus’ manner—the attitude, skill and knowledge in which he does this. This “open and accepting manner intrigues the woman,” Gundry-Volf observes. When the woman queries Jesus about why he, a Jew, was talking to her, a despised Samaritan woman in the middle of the day and alone, he engages in conversation that is deep, meaningful and personal. He tells her about himself, referring to himself as living water that would forever quench her thirst. Then with genuine compassion he talks with her about her past and current marital and immoral living status, and enlightens her about where and how to worship the true God. The inclusive manner in which Jesus offers her living water was a gift that so deeply drew out her thirst and then satisfied this woman that she put down her jug and immediately went to tell those in the city. Disregarding her social status, she was compelled to tell everyone about this radical man who spoke truth to her in a manner that engaged the ethnic strife between them. The result is that many Samaritans believed that

---

69 Ibid., 19.

70 Ibid., 17.
Jesus was the Messiah and they invited Jesus and the disciples to stay with them. They stayed in the homes of the Samaritans for two days, welcomed as their guests.

Jesus’ posture or manner in this situation “does not operate with stereotypes,” explains Gundry-Volf. Jesus “is open; he embraces people who are unlike him, even hostile to him. He does not try to squeeze them into a mold or demand their conformity to foreign ways for the enjoyment of salvation.” Instead, Gundry-Volf points out, Jesus “patiently draws them out to see and desire this marvelous gift. He breaks down the barriers that stand between people.”71 The Samaritan woman saw hope and healing for fellowship in the explanations and the accepting relationship she found in this unusual Jew and man. Jesus taught by his example of crossing cultural boundaries “that spirituality can be transformed by embracing the risks of relational intimacy and alterity.”72

This story teaches another lesson. As a Jew, Jesus understood and explained to this Samaritan woman that the place to worship was neither the Samaritan place nor the Jewish place, not Mount Gerizim nor Mount Zion. Jesus’ answer is, as Gundry-Volf says, “On no mountain, but in spirit. Or: on any mountain—in spirit.”73 It is a way that all people—Jew and Samaritan, Gentile and Greek, woman and man, bad and good—can worship God. Jesus was teaching the woman and his disciples that the form and the place no longer mattered for how to truly seek and worship the sacred with others.

71 Ibid., 21.
73 Gundry-Volf, 21.
As Jesus models and explains the truth of the Gospel message, it should free believers from the cultural boundaries of religious form. Instead, they should practice a culturally sensitive and welcoming manner that invites all people. The manner in which this welcoming is done matters. Believers must develop this competence that Jesus so admirably models if they are to be true beacons of light. They must learn how to embrace in culturally sensitive and competent ways.

**The Syrophoenician Woman**

Jesus is the ultimate example of alterity. Given that Jesus was divine, this would be a fair conclusion to make about him. Jesus was also human. He came to earth as a human, born of a human who mysteriously conceived through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Luke describes Jesus as one who “increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). His family nurtured and trained him according to the Mosaic laws. He learned well God’s laws just as he learned about the laws of the land (Luke 2:41-52). It is likely, then, that like other humans Jesus grew in his understanding of Yahweh Elohim and of himself as a Jew in his culture and religious context. In Luke’s gospel alone, the author makes repeatedly clear in his descriptions of Jesus’ interactions with Jewish leaders that Jesus knew the culture, subcultures and the politics that influenced his life and the conflicts that surrounded him (Luke 5:17-7:11). Jesus was also tempted in powerful and intimate ways, withstanding the temptations and comforted by angels (Mt. 4:1-17). Jesus surrounded himself with companions and found joy and sadness in their presence (John 13-17; Luke 22:39-53).

If Jesus had not experienced his humanity with others in these ways, he would not likely be considered a model of what it means to be human, suffering and developing his
identity in light of his relationship to God (Phil. 2:5-11). If he were not human, he could not have paid the just price for the sins of all humanity (Heb. 9:11-28). Given the humanity of Jesus, it is reasonable to conclude that like all humans, people and culture greatly influenced Jesus’ worldview development and his unfolding understanding of himself as Messiah. The biblical narratives suggest that engagement in alterity did influence Jesus’ multicultural worldview development.

The wedding at Cana is an example of others’ influence on Jesus’ developing understanding of his mission, and his actions to support it. In this example, Jesus’ mother prompted him to be public about his ability to do miracles. Mary told Jesus that he should solve the problem that the wine had run out so to save the bridal family’s honor. Yet Jesus’ reply was, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” What was her reply? She told the servants, “Do whatever he says.” And then Jesus turned the water into wine in a bountiful and rich way (John 2:1-13). Is the reason he did this because he had a nagging mother who pressured him? This is not likely John’s purpose to tell this story. Jesus seemed to need the people around him to prompt and encourage his own developing understanding of his purpose and full mission.

Just as Jesus grew in his recognition of himself as Messiah through the prompting of others (John 2:1-13), so did he expand his understanding about who was in his mission field. The Israel of Jesus’ time and context was “so entangled with ethnic identity that it would be quite impossible to speak of the inclusion of the Gentiles in an ethnically-based Israel,”

“ethnic factor” had to be “dealt with,” concludes Yee, in order for God’s mission to move forward. Jesus led this challenge.

The need for Jesus to deal with this ethnic factor is shown in Matthew’s and Mark’s story of Jesus encounter with the Syrophoenician or Canaanite woman (Mt. 15:21-28; 7:24-31). While Jesus was seeking solitude and rest in Tyre and Sidon, a Syrophoenician mother repeatedly begged Jesus to cast out the demon from her little daughter. The mother was an insistent Gentile, a wealthy Hellenist woman who pleaded for unbiased, divine mercy from this poor and unusual Jew, and divine Son of God.

To understand the significance of this story, it helps to know the ethnic background of this woman and its relationship and status to Jesus as a Jew. This Syrophoenician woman and her people were Canaanite, the people who in the Old Testament Yahweh Elohim ordered to be utterly destroyed because of their unashamed cult worship, immorality and unrighteousness (Lev. 18, Deut. 20:16-18). Scholars also speculate that the Jews who lived in the area followed a corrupt religion.

As Jesus sought solitude and rest, he first completely ignores the woman’s initial plea for mercy to heal her daughter: “But he did not answer her a word” (Mt. 15:23). When she cries out again, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David,” he answers, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (15:24). At this point in the story, Jesus indicates that he understood that his primary mission field was for the Jews who were the house of Israel. Gundry-Volf points out, though, that Jesus had indeed previously responded to and healed Gentiles, for example the Gentile centurion’s

75 Ibid.

76 “Canaan, Canaanites,” Zondervan Handbook to the Bible, 784.
daughter from Capernaum (Mt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-11). Gundry-Volf argues that the writers of this story are trying to tell their readers something more, beyond the traditional understanding that Jesus was tired and did not want to be a miracle worker on that day.

What is different in this instance, Gundry-Volf argues, is that Jesus responds with an answer of ethnic exclusivity that is very unlike his response to the centurion. Could it be, as Gundry-Volf suggests, that Jesus does not see a contradiction to his “exclusive mission to the Jews”? She goes on to explore that “perhaps the reason is that the centurion has approached Jesus man to man, commander to commander. The commonality between them apparently bridges the ethnic gap.” Perhaps, she speculates, this is why “Jesus responds without hesitation to the centurion’s faith (8:7, 13).” What helps readers to understand the significant difference between Jesus’ response to the centurion and the Syrophoenician woman is what Jesus did after the latter experience. After the miracle of the centurion’s daughter, no mission is expanded to the Gentiles on any broad basis. In contrast, after the healing of the Syrophoenician’s daughter Jesus’ mission significantly expanded to include multitudes of Gentiles. The Jewish religious leaders began to take serious notice of the expansion of Jesus’ mission field and the increased power it represented (Mt. 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9:32).

The insistent Gentile woman cries again, in the posture of worship: “Lord, help me” (15:25). This time Jesus’ answer is, as told in Mark, “Let the children [Israelites] be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs [non-Israelites]” (7:27). Even with Jesus’ seemingly demoralizing and pejorative reply, this insistent Gentile woman answers him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that

77 Gundry-Volf, 28.
fall from their master’s table. Then Jesus answered her with an explanation similar to the one given to the centurion (Mt. 7:10), “‘O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly” (Mt. 15:27-28).

The insistent woman appealed, not to her right to salvation, but to God’s divine and blind mercy. Gundry-Volf explains:

Her kind of faith, faith in unbiased, undeserved mercy—the faith of the powerless, not of the powerful—did not overshadow her ethnic and gender otherness but highlighted it. In the encounter with her, Jesus is faced squarely with the apparent contradiction between fulfilling this Gentile’s request and his perceived mission to Israel alone. Yet when the powerless woman impresses on him the power of mercy that is not based on privilege through birth or deserts, Jesus’ sense of his mission is expanded through this principle of mercy, the basis of her faith. . . . In this light he senses how appropriate it is that Gentiles should experience the fruit of his work now. . . . Fittingly, her desire determined Jesus’ action, for she rightly expected divine grace to be extended to the Gentiles.78

The stories that follow this passage in Matthew’s and Mark’s gospels show a significant shift in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus preached, healed, and fed multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles, showing unbiased mercy. It seems that something shifted cognitively in Jesus’ understanding of God’s mission for himself. His behavior also changed as he then went out to the thousands on the hills who came out to hear him teach and heal their bodies and their souls. Jesus’ affections also shifted. He had compassion on the multitudes in their devotion to him and so he feed the four thousand people (Mt. 15:32). The result? The people “glorified the God of Israel,” Matthew exclaims. As a Jew writing to Jews, Matthew was making a specific “inner-Jewish self-designation to Jews”79 about Jesus’ ministry to these corrupt Jews and pagan Gentiles (15:31).

78 Ibid., 28-29.
79 Yee, 90.
Through the faith of this woman who was ethnically and religiously different from the tired miracle worker, Jesus recognized God’s call from the exclusive mission field of the children of Abraham to the expanded field of the children of God. He shifted his worldview beliefs and goals and responded in action, showing mercy to the Gentiles as equal to receive salvation through his sacrifice on the cross (15:32-38). Jesus, the ultimate model, experienced spiritual intensification and worldview development toward an expanded space to enable him to embrace his Father’s global vision.

Peter’s Critical Incidents With the Gentiles

Peter, too, experienced cross-cultural critical incidents that led him to test his worldview in the light of Jesus’ call to God’s global vision. Peter’s story is filled with visions and dreams, as well as a friend’s confrontation. God clearly wanted Peter’s attention and understanding to shift from what his ethnocentric worldview understood to that of a multicultural worldview.

As a close disciple of Jesus, Peter observed Jesus’ startling ethnic development as he moved from occasional interactions with Gentiles to an intense ministry to pagan Gentiles. There is, however, little specific mention about Peter’s ethnic development in these passages. It is at Pentecost (Acts 2) where readers first observe Peter’s series of cross-cultural incidents. In response to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter witnessed multitudes of Jews and proselytes from many cultures and nations praising God in their own tongues and that of others. Then Peter spoke to the multiethnic multitudes and told them who Jesus of Nazareth truly was. Peter also quoted the prophet Joel who said, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:28-32). On Pentecost day three thousand people claimed Jesus as the
messiah and were baptized by the Holy Spirit and by water (Acts 2:41). The experience made clear to Peter and all who were there that salvation in Christ was for everyone from every tribe and nation.

Surely this experience and Jesus’ command must have inspired Peter’s call to go out of Jerusalem to tell others the Good News. It also likely caused him some cultural dissonance. He had never before eaten in the home of a Gentile, for Jewish law forbid it. Though inspired and the one to proclaim that Jesus came and died for all people, his journey toward a worldview that could fully embrace differences was a challenge. God intervened in a mighty way to stir the comfort of what Peter thought was certain.

Peter’s second critical incident is the story of how Cornelius, a centurion and Gentile, became the first recorded Gentile to become a follower of Jesus (Acts 10). Already inclined toward spiritual things and the Jew’s God, an angel came to Cornelius telling him that he should find a Jew named Simon who is called Peter. Meanwhile, God also sent Peter a vision. This was an odd vision, but the meaning soon became clear. Peter was to eat unclean meat that had been made clean. “What God has made clean,” the voice said to him repeatedly, “do not call common” (10:9-17). The Mosaic law clearly taught that Jews should not eat unclean or common meat. Daniel knew this as well and would not disobey this law while in Babylonian captivity. But Peter’s vision was clear and he was perplexed (10:17).

What followed was Peter boldly stepping across cultural norms and boundaries to welcome and embrace Gentiles as followers of Jesus and companions in the call. In his own words, he states the startling shift he had made in his understanding of the implications of Joel’s prophetic words. As Peter entered the home of a Gentile for the
first time, he told those who were gathered, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection.” Peter then told them the Good News and the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles who heard and they were baptized by Spirit and water. Peter witnessed all of this first-hand.

Again, how startling and critical this incident must have been to Peter’s worldview, his way of making sense of social rules and membership, purity and salvation. Conde-Frazier observes:

The Gentiles did not need to convert to the Judaic form of expressing their faith in Jesus. Instead, the Spirit of Jesus was affirming the culture of the Gentiles, allowing them freedom of expression in living out the gospel. There are great commonalities in the comprehension of salvation. The differences that arise need to be appreciated and respected.80

Peter was clearly making significant progress toward a worldview that could consider behavior and values from different perspectives. He was on the road to developing a multicultural worldview. He was embracing the other.

The next step in the sequence of critical incidents that God clearly orchestrated was Peter going back to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish Council and the “circumcision party.” Peter boldly told the Council in detail all that he had seen and experienced, validating the authenticity of the Gentiles as followers of Jesus. He concluded by telling them, “If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should stand in God’s way?” (11:17). When the

---

council heard the story of visions, dreams and angel visits, and even the breaking of Mosaic law, they too did not deny that surely, the Good News was for all.

The problem is that these faithful Jews still believed that rituals would seal them as “kosher”; they did not understand that Jesus was the final seal to pardon the penalty for their sins. The Jerusalem Council, especially the circumcision party and the party of Pharisees, seemed to still be in the process of shifting to a complete understanding of what it meant that Jesus fulfilled the covenant and they were now free and secure in Jesus (Acts 15). Some still demanded that Gentiles who came to believe in and follow Jesus had to be circumcised according to the Mosaic law in order to be saved (15:1). They did not yet understand that Jesus was the final blood sacrifice and that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of water were the experience and symbol that they were sealed.

This circumcision party and the party of Pharisees stayed in an ethnocentric worldview, accepting that there were cultural differences and that it was now acceptable to mix with Gentiles. Still, they also demanded that what they knew to be true must be true, not being willing to consider the possibility that Jesus had changed all of that. Life was still understood from a polarized perspective, an us-and-them way of making sense of what was true and how things should be done. In this case it was the Gentiles who were “them” and they were the ones who had to conform to the Jewish rituals and norms of authentication before they would be fully welcomed as members of the group of Jesus followers. This group of Jews required the Gentiles to make a cultural conversion as well as a spiritual one.81

---

81 Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 341.
Finally, after much discussion with Peter, Barnabas and Paul and hearing stories of “what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles” (15:12), the Council determined that the Gentiles were required to only follow a few of the Mosaic and purity laws, not circumcision.

Though Peter was clearly making progress in shifting his worldview to an expanded understanding of the different expressions of being a follower of Jesus, what followed for him was a friend’s confrontation. Paul write of the incident to the believers in Galatia:

But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas [Peter] before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jews, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (Gal. 2:11-14)

Apparently, Peter was struggling with how to behave with different ethnic followers of Jesus. The problem was not that Peter was able to culturally adapt to the different groups, it was that he could not do so with integrity because he was under pressure from the Judaizers. This is a challenging scenario to make sense of. Kraft, however, explains this challenge as one of biblical relativity, but not relativity. Kraft explains:

This principle of approaching each situation in terms of its own special cultural circumstances is a constant supracultural principle of God’s interaction with people. The principle, therefore, is not relative, but it’s application in the relative context of human culture illustrates once again the correctness of the “biblical relativity” understanding of God’s approach to people. . . . The relative application of God’s supracultural principle explains, for example, how Paul could object strenuously to Peter compromising in a Gentile context under pressure from the Judaizers. . . . Yet, later, he himself, when in a wholly Jewish
context, went through Hebrew rites of purification to demonstrate to them that he had not abandoned Judaism (Acts 32:20-26). Likewise, Paul could circumcise Timothy who had a Greek father but a Jewish mother, in order to give him an “in” with the Jews (Acts 16:3), yet not compel Titus, whose parentage allowed him no such “in” with the Jews, to go the same route (Gal. 2:3).82

Kraft’s biblical relativity principle is helpful in working through the tension of living within and above culture while having integrity. This is the tension of a multicultural worldview and Peter is clearly trying to figure it out. Fortunately, his friend, Paul, challenged him on the act of relativity, encouraging Peter to make a decision about how he is going to deal with the struggle of his true identity. In the end, Peter remained the “apostle to the circumcised” (Gal. 2:8).

Paul’s Attention to Particularities and Universality

Paul also struggled and expanded his understanding of the complexity and dynamics of cultural difference, realizing that in order to wisely disciple all people toward inclusive fellowship with others and God, a person and community must accept and adapt to culture in biblically relative ways.

Even before he became a follower of Jesus, Paul was raised and lived his life in a multicultural and multilingual world.83 He was a Jewish scholar, leader and Roman citizen. Despite these cross-cultural experiences and knowledge, he deeply hated the followers of Jesus, leading, persecuting and approving the executions of these believers (Acts 7:54-8:3). He was, in today’s fiery connotations, a jihadist, a choice that was not out of the norm for ways to deal with blasphemers. His conclusion for how to resolve the

82 Kraft, 128.

83 Parrett and Kang, 58-59.
problem of different worldviews was through violence, until Jesus came to him directly and dramatically in a blinding light on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). Paul’s meeting with Jesus was the beginning of his spiritual intensification that would develop his worldview from a blind and violent ethnocentric lens to a healed and peace-seeking multicultural lens and mission. This hater of the followers of Jesus became the apostle to the uncircumcised.

Paul’s multicultural worldview embraces and integrates the complex dynamics of culture and the essence of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. He, a Jew, reassures the Gentiles in Ephesus that the blood of Christ is their peace. For Christ “has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. . . . For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . . being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (Eph. 2:14-22). His heralded declaration to the believers in Galatia is that there is universality in the gospel of Jesus (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

What is confusing about Paul is that at other times he does make distinctions about the particularities regarding culture, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic relations. What is this about? The reality of Paul’s time and today is that the particularities of these categories do not cease to exist even though salvation is for all people and those who follow Jesus are one in Christ. Paul recognizes and integrates ethnic identity with identity in Christ. Volf explains:

The grounding of unity and universality in the scandalous particularity of the suffering body of God’s Messiah is what makes Paul’s thought structurally so
profundely different from the kinds of beliefs in the all-importance of the undifferentiated universal spirit.84

While the universality of salvation through Christ alone and for all is absolutely the key to the Gospel, the cultural particularities of individuals and people groups are also key to following the mission. Paul proclaims that it is in the diversity of the body that believers can most effectively follow Jesus’ great commission and great commandment: to love God and one’s neighbor by going out to disciple all people (1 Cor. 12).

Volf goes on to explain what this can mean as Christians relate to culture, their own and others. In a similar line of thinking as Niebuhr’s discussion in Christ and Culture, Volf explains that those who follow Jesus are not called to absorb, ignore or separate from culture.85 Rather, to grow in Christian maturity and follow Christ’s call is to both belong in a culture and distant from the culture. “Distance from a culture must never degenerate into flight from that culture but must be a way of living in a culture.”86

How does one do this? Clearly, the Bible offers its readers stories of how others navigated this cross-cultural sojourn to develop a multicultural worldview. Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Jesus, Peter and Paul are models for how to do this effectively.

Paul appeals to the churches in Rome, seeking their blessing that he go on to Spain to bring the Good News to yet another people with another culture, belief system and worldview.87 Paul writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

84 Volf, 47.
86 Volf., 50.
the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is
good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). Volf understands Paul’s words to mean
that “the Spirit of God breaks through the self-enclosed worlds we inhabit; the Spirit re-
creates us and sets us on the road toward becoming . . . a personality enriched by
otherness, a personality which is what it is only because multiple others have been
reflected in it in a particular way.”88 Volf explains that “the distance from my own culture
that results from being born by the Spirit creates a fissure in me through which others can
come in. The Spirit unlatches the doors of my heart saying: ‘You are not only you; others
belong to you too.’”89 God’s supracultural and relational Spirit is what will empower and
transform those who seek God and God’s worldview to meet the conversion challenge.
Through the challenge to open one’s cognitive, behavioral and affective space to embrace
others in alterity comes a deep sense of the fullness of God’s beauty and reconciliation
with God.

In fact, Paul finds great freedom in this multicultural worldview. It allows him to
be who he needs to be for the sake of telling people of all cultures and worldviews about
the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul teaches that believers are not to put “obstacles in
anyone’s way” (2 Cor. 6:3) that would keep people from the knowledge of Jesus as the
savior of souls. Differing cultures and their particularities should not be what keeps
people from sharing this knowledge and welcoming others as equal members. Paul
admonishes the church at Corinth for creating such obstacles due to cultural norms:

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might
win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those
under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the

88 Volf, 51.
89 Ibid.
that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel that I may share with them in its blessing. (1 Cor. 19:23)

Paul did not find this freedom an easy task and he often found himself struggling upstream against the current of other followers of Jesus. Still, from his experience and will to embrace differentness, Paul found that a multicultural worldview was key to his understanding of accomplishing God’s cross-cultural mission of reconciliation.

Called to Develop a Biblically Relative Multicultural Worldview

Paul’s words to the church of Christ follow the model of Jesus, Peter, Joseph, Daniel and Esther, who, with prudence and discernment, willingly learned the ways of the culture in order to be a blessing to a nation and a people, and a light to the path toward reconciliation with God. All who follow this call to be a light to the nations are implicitly also called to experience the tension of having their worldview challenged. Yet this tension is what Jesus calls his followers to welcome. Like Jesus, those who seek the kingdom of God are called to engage in this challenge to develop toward a manner that inclusively invites and accepts all to the dialogue. This is the call to be disciples to one another: to “come alongside the other to seek an encounter together with the truth, taking aim to perceive it more clearly, consider it more critically, embrace it more passionately, obey it more faithfully and embody it with greater integrity.”90 This will to embrace the other and to follow this call requires the intercultural competence to do so in sophisticated ways and directed by God’s will. It requires believers to cognitively and

---

90 Conde-Frazier, Kang and Parrett, 8.
emotionally differentiate between themselves and others and process the discomfort of the ambiguity of these differences. This means integrating faith convictions and biblical principles with a multicultural worldview.

**A Multicultural Hermeneutical Community**

These biblical narratives also implicitly teach the importance of a community of believers to wisely discern when to compromise in a culture and when to be exclusive. Daniel clearly had this community with his fellow Hebrew captives. Esther and Mordecai shared this as well. In addition to the importance of a community of believers to support multicultural worldview growth, however, is that it is a multicultural hermeneutical community. A multicultural hermeneutical community is one in which there are people with multiple cultural perspectives and life experiences in dialogue to contribute crucial perspectives and interpretations about life with God and the meaning of Scripture. The diversity of members serve as bridges into other cultural perspectives as the multicultural community interprets Scripture and what it teaches about life experiences from a variety of cultural perspectives. Kraft refers to this experience as dialogical hermeneutics:

> The hermeneutical process, then, involves a dynamic interaction or dialogue between an interpreter deeply enmeshed in his or her own culture and worldview (including theological biases) and the Scriptures. The interpreter has needs, some of which he or she formulates into questions, “asking” these questions of the Scriptures and finding certain of them answered. Other questions remain unanswered. . . . It is a dynamic process that properly demands deep subjective involvement on the part of Christian interpreters operating within the Christian community (which includes scholars) both with the Scriptures and with the life of the world around them in which they live.  

---


92 Kraft, 146.
Paul repeatedly speaks affectionately about his multicultural hermeneutical community of believers. These companions encouraged and supported him. They also joined him in the task of keeping the Good News message centered on the new freedom in Christ and persuading others to do the same. The companions were people from a spectrum of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds—Barnabas, Peter, Luke, Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, Nympha, Aquila and Claudia. Paul ends his letter to Rome with a long list of affectionate greetings to women, men and families from several different ethnic origins (Romans 16). This diverse mix of companions is a multicultural hermeneutical community. A multicultural hermeneutical community is a key dimension in the search for truth as the community seeks to unearth and discern what are cultural norms and what are God’s ways no matter what the cultural context. It is a key dimension to avoiding syncretistic compromise in the effort to adapt to a culture and develop a multicultural worldview.

Crouch argues that being in a multicultural hermeneutical community is a way to sort out the behaviors and theologies that cultural traditions, rituals and orthodoxy can mutate into as they find themselves over time imbedded in culture. Rituals and theologies can lose the functional essence of what they were intended to accomplish because they develop within a culture. “ Trying to discern the idolatries, the misplaced importances of our culture is like trying to remove our own appendix,” Crouch warns. “However vestigial it may appear, its removal will be painful; in any case, we can barely see it.”93 This challenge to discern something that is nearly subconscious is why engaging with others from different cultures and perspectives is crucial. The diversity of perspectives helps the community of believers to grow in its awareness of their culturally influenced

---

93 Crouch, 38-39.
norms of thinking, behaving and feeling as they exchange and compare their perspectives. It is an emic and etic interchange of perspectives. The multicultural hermeneutical community is also a support in those times of pain that Crouch speaks about and that the biblical narratives tell about. This pain is the tension sojourners experience when they confront the challenges of alterity, especially those sojourners with deep religious convictions, systems and ritualistic behaviors.

As sojourners engage with people, worldviews and cultural norms different from their own that challenge what they believe is true and right, the confrontation creates confusion and uncertainty about what was thought certain. The experience requires humility and the study of culture, society and people, just as Daniel so clearly modeled. It requires one to recognize and reconsider his or her own identity as differentiated from the comfort of one’s own culture and norms and ways of making sense of life’s challenging questions. It requires a multicultural hermeneutical community to discern together what it truly means to be kingdom seekers. The result of facing this confrontation with differences and embracing the experience can be the development of intercultural competence and a multicultural worldview.

Joseph, Esther, and Daniel learned how to wisely discern how to live with integrity in the respective cultures in ways that to some would appear as unrighteous, not protecting and advocating God’s righteousness and laws. They had to learn how to live righteously amidst what was clearly unrighteous without attitude and action that alienated them from all. Certainly they did alienate some. That is what got Joseph and Daniel thrown into the lion’s den. These incidents happened because they would not bend to the unrighteous ways of those who wanted them killed. Still, Joseph, Esther and Daniel had
to develop deep cross-cultural relationships with those in the respective cultures to stay in good standing with those whom God clearly wanted them to influence.

Crouch pointedly states, “To diagnose and treat another culture’s unique failings without active partnerships and relationships with [those from the culture] is violence, not surgery. Only together [in multicultural relationships] can we discern the deeper significance of any given cultural practices, its redemptive possibilities, and its tempting distortions of the life that really is life.”94 In other words, believers must engage in alterity if they are to understand God and one another more fully, being careful about the conclusions made about life. It is through these relationships that believers can more soundly develop a true identity and allegiance to the sacred. Kort agrees with Crouch, saying,

We are persons not in and by ourselves, not in our individuality first of all, but in and through our relations with others. This is because a relation with someone means engaging in an open interaction in which the dynamics of similarity and difference begin to clarify for me not only who the other person is but also who I am. And difference is as important for that process as similarity. It is only persons who mistakenly think of themselves as having fixed and certain identities who will fail to see the encounters with persons who are different disclose not only something about other persons but also something, heretofore undisclosed, about themselves.95

To develop the skill, knowledge and character of alterity is godly wisdom and developmentally inherent in God’s call to be a light to all nations. A key dimension to developing this skill with godly wisdom is to do so in a multicultural hermeneutical community.

---

94 Ibid., 39.
95 Kort, 478.
Believers today have biblical models with stories that tell about their tension to know when to accommodate and when to exclude, when to pay attention to universalities and when to pay attention to particularities. These models and stories can inform and encourage believers about how to follow Jesus’ call with intercultural competence and a biblically relative multicultural worldview.

This is the call and mission that Bethel University seeks to follow as it nurtures its students toward maturity as interculturally competent reconcilers and world changers. The goal of this research is to seek a deeper understanding of how to nurture sojourners through the critical incident necessary to develop intercultural competence and a multicultural worldview.
CHAPTER THREE

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

While a growing body of research is exploring theoretically grounded educational practices to support cross-cultural sojourners, little has been written that empirically studies the deep epistemological phenomenon that occurs during the critical incidents that sojourners experience, especially the experience of worldview development. The contextual and confounding variables of this phenomenon challenge researchers to produce valid and reliable findings. Meanwhile, leading international educators agree that sojourners must enter this deep level of relational and epistemological experience if they desire deep transformation toward greater intercultural sensitivity and competence. Scholarly literature offers a growing and sophisticated discussion about the desired developmental and transformative outcomes and components that experts describe as intercultural competence. A review of literature from the fields of education, psychology and intercultural studies supports the conclusion that deliberate reflective processing and social support offer cross-cultural sojourners the key to epistemological and developmental transformation.
Worldview Challenges

Sojourners often experience challenges to their worldviews during their cross-cultural exchanges. This kind of experience is often referred to as a “critical incident” because it is often a particular or a collection of experiences that forces a person to decide what is real or how to make sense of a new and often conflicting possible reality. If the person shifts his or her answer from what was previously held, a worldview shift is the result. Anthropologist Paul Hiebert offers an explanation and model by which to understand how worldviews shift or develop, the functions worldviews perform in people’s daily lives, consciously and unconsciously, and the potential for worldview transformation. He defines “worldview” as “‘the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives.’ It encompasses people’s images or maps of the reality of all things they use for living their lives.”

A worldview is not merely a vision of life, but a vision for how life is to be lived. People experience life’s daily events, filtering and testing the events through their worldview (beliefs, feelings, values) as informed, reinforced and codified by their unique cultural context and the members of that culture. This is the epistemological exercise of defining what is real. People then make decisions based on this active processing, filtering events through their worldview and behaving in a way that a cultural context supports.

---


Contributing to Hiebert’s explanation, Marsella describes worldviews as:

Cultural templates for negotiating reality [that] emerge from our in-born human effort after meaning, an effort that reflexively provokes us to describe, understand, predict, and control the world about us through ordering of stimuli into complex belief and meaning systems that can guide behavior. Our brain not only responds to stimuli, it also organizes, connects and symbolizes them, and in this process, it generates patterns of explicit and implicit meanings and purposes that promote survival, growth, and development. This process occurs through socialization and often leads us to accept the idea that our constructed realities are in fact realities. The “relativity” of the process and product is ignored in favor of the “certainty” provided by the assumption that our way of life is correct, righteous, and indisputable (e.g., ethnocentricity).  

Thus, the process of worldview development is a dynamic negotiation of filtering and testing how to make sense of and respond to life’s experiences. Humankind’s usual goal is to create a stable way of making meaning out of the uncertainties of life. The dynamic map of reality is shared with the community and experienced and confirmed within a cultural context.

Hiebert categorizes six cultural and social functions of worldviews:

1. **Maps of Reality**: Worldviews provide mental models to answer ultimate questions. They provide “maps of reality that structure our perceptions of reality, but we use them as maps for living. . . . Worldviews emerge out of one’s interaction with the world—individually and corporately. Culture is external to the individuals.”

2. **Emotional Security**: Worldviews provide emotional security. A worldview often supports and protects one during the high and low points of life. This is why one most

---

98 Marsella, 658-59.

often can observe the particulars of a culture’s worldview at events surrounding life, death, marriage, and celebrations.\textsuperscript{100}

3. **Norms:** Worldviews provide a way for people to predict and prescribe how life should go and often develop into norms of believing, behaving, thinking and feeling. People use these norms to judge what is right and wrong.\textsuperscript{101}

4. **Synthesize and Organize:** Worldviews provide a way to synthesize and organize “our ideas, feelings and values into a more or less unified view of reality.”\textsuperscript{102} They help to create and make sense of one’s reality map and belief system.

5. **Make Sense of Differences:** Worldviews provide a framework by which to make sense of new ideas, behavior and patterns of thinking. It is a testing and filtering framework. As people experience other worldviews in cross-culture experiences, they filter the new experiences through their worldviews, explains Hiebert, “to select those that fit our culture and reject those that do not. It also helps us to reinterpret those we adopt so that they fit our overall cultural pattern.”\textsuperscript{103} Kraft affirms that this worldview monitoring function “lies at the heart of a culture, providing the basic model(s) for bridging the gap between the ‘objective’ reality outside people’s heads and the culturally agreed upon perception of that reality inside their heads.”\textsuperscript{104}

6. **Psychological Assurance of Reality:** Worldviews provide a “psychological assurance that the world is truly as we see it and a sense of peace and belonging in the world in

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 30.

\textsuperscript{104} Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 56.
which we live. People experience a worldview crisis when there is a gap between their worldview and their experience of reality.  

Hiebert’s explanation of worldview functions sheds light on why a cross-cultural sojourn presents humans with challenges, with cultural dissonance. During these experiences, a sojourner’s worldview—the norms and places of comfort—is challenged and he or she must decide how to affectively, behaviorally and cognitively make sense of the differences, testing his or her truth and reliability according to the known worldview. This experience of cultural dissonance creates a disorienting dilemma of disequilibrium. This is the critical incident.

The Critical Incident and Transformative Worldview Development

This dilemma forms the critical incident or crucible experience that creates epistemological stress. It requires a response and presents the potential for a worldview shift, if the sojourner is willing to take the risk. Because of this incident, the sojourner must negotiate reality, which involves trying to make meaning and shifting meaning perspectives, learning from the differences and questioning how to integrate them with his or her own norms and places of comfort. This presents the sojourner with the unique

---

105 Hiebert, Transforming Worldviews, 30.

opportunity for deep transformation to take place that can lead to increased intercultural sensitivity and competency.\(^{107}\)

Scholars across the disciplines support the belief that during times of epistemological stress, transformative learning can take place. Considerable research has explored the psychological and sociological cultural adjustment, coping strategies and training as ways to prepare sojourners for the experience of what many commonly refer to as culture shock.\(^{108}\) Scholarly investigation of intercultural adjustment has primarily focused on learning how to productively adjust from the discomfort that engaging with differences creates and how to go back to a place of affective, behavioral and cognitive comfort. As a result, intercultural educators research and emphasize pedagogy and


experiences to support sojourners to effectively learn about host-country language, culture-general frameworks and culture-specific knowledge. In essence, intercultural education involves training in cross-cultural problem solving and conflict management using models of experiential training that have informed pedagogy and program designs.

However, as educators and researchers learn more about the complexity of the adjustment experience and refine the goals of intercultural education, the conversation is shifting. It is shifting from how to prepare sojourners for effective cultural adjustment to how to prepare and support sojourns for epistemological transformation. The educator’s goal has shifted to the need to develop skill sets and attitudes in sojourners to help them recognize the challenge of interacting with differences, not as a problem to solve but as a resource for solving problems.109 This competence, argues Friedman and Berthoin Antal, “enables people to discover differing views of reality, making it more likely that they will create common understandings and generate collaborative action.”110 Scholars and practitioners investigating this transformative goal would describe a person with this

---


110 V. Friedman and Berthoin Antal, 70.
competency as one with a “multicultural identity” or an “ethnorelative worldview orientation.”

Transformational Intercultural Development

In Allan’s qualitative case study of intercultural learning and multicultural personality in students attending an international school, the experience of “cultural dissonance was seen to be both the means and the medium of intercultural learning, in that students had to learn from and through this in order to negotiate the minefield of cross-cultural personal interaction.”111 Through an analysis of students’ narratives regarding their experiences, Allan found that the students who processed the critical incidents of cultural dissonance with deliberate and practical reflection showed “the personal qualities of individual cognitive skills, empathy and reflection, and self-confidence.”112 Extensive study supports this finding.113 Allan adds that this investigation supports the suspicion that navigating cultural dissonance “does not happen automatically in a culturally diverse school population.”114 In other words, just being in a

111 Allan, 89.
112 Allan, 89.
114 Allan, 105.
culturally diverse setting does not mean that people will automatically develop intercultural sensitivity and competency.

For the 11 to 18-year-old students in Allan’s international school, self-esteem and navigating in-group and out-group status (stereotyping and prejudice) emerged as motivating factors to work through the cultural dissonance. Allan observes the working of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle, though Allan presents it as a spiral moving through the outcomes of ethnocentrism, through adaptation and understanding rather than Kolb’s progressive reflective and praxis cycle of transitory phases.\textsuperscript{115} Allan found that students developing in their intercultural competence moved from a concrete experience of difference to reflective observation to the abstract conceptualization that resulted in active experimentation. With an expanding capacity or repertoire of experience and skills by which to process the dissonance, students progressed from an ethnocentric awareness to adaptation and understanding of differences:

\begin{quote}
It is a development of the personality of the student, where s/he learns to see and understand different facets of behaviour in people of other cultures, and is able to relate them to him/herself and adapt behavior accordingly. This ability becomes an intrinsic part of personal development, a widening and pluralization of the parameters of social (or symbolic) interaction, leading to multiculturalism in the true sense, of one who has learned the personal interaction skills to be able to communicate on various levels with people of other cultures, not only ones with which she has had concrete experience, but losing the mystification and confusion when confronted with the new or the strange.\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{116} Allan, 104.
This process, concludes Allan, is more than just adding knowledge about other cultures; it is a transformative development of a multicultural identity and action.\footnote{Ibid.}

\textit{Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity}

Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is often cited as a theory and framework from which to understand and support cross-cultural sojourners’ transformational development toward a multicultural identity and productive global citizenship. The DMIS is the foundational theoretical framework on which this thesis research is grounded. An accompanying measurement tool that grew out of Bennett’s DMIS is also used to identify placement of this study’s subjects within this theoretical worldview framework before and after their cross-cultural experience to learn about their worldview development. Bennett and colleague Mitchell Hammer authored this tool: the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

The DMIS is a personal-growth model that describes cross-cultural sojourners’ worldview orientation as it relates to the phenomenology of differences. It describes stages of growth and encourages movement toward increased intercultural sensitivity and an ethnorelativist or multicultural worldview and identity. Bennett bases the model on the psychological organizing concept of differentiation, as this is the sojourners’ overwhelming subjective experience from which they confront different ways of behaving, thinking and feeling about life, of ways of making sense about life. The sojourner’s worldview is challenged and he or she must differentiate what is regarded as the norm from what is new and strange, and then decide how to respond to make meaning.
of reality. This is the epistemological task of negotiating reality.\textsuperscript{118} This concept, says Bennett, “of fundamental difference in cultural worldview is the most problematic and threatening idea that many of us ever encounter.”\textsuperscript{119} The problem and challenge of cultural differences stems from humans’ proclivity to avoid making accurate meaning from different perspectives and the deep worldview shift. To do so means inviting psychological dissonance.

Bennett posits a spectrum of six stages in which sojourners and educators can describe how they respond to cultural worldview differences. Bennett theorizes that sojourners move sequentially through these stages as they expand their capacity to cope and adjust to an increasingly more complex and sophisticated understanding of the influence that culture has on worldview development. If carefully attended to, this expanded capacity to cope can develop intercultural sensitivity and lead to increased intercultural competency.

Bennett’s first set of three stages begins with a monocultural or ethnocentric worldview orientation. “Ethnocentric” means that people make sense of life through the one ethnic lens of their own culturally influenced worldview. Bennett assumes that all people from all cultures initially experience life from an ethnocentric orientation, as that is what most people primarily know and what is reinforced by their cultural community.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} V. Friedman and Berthoin Antal; Marsella.

\textsuperscript{119} M. Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism,” 22.

\textsuperscript{120} Marsella, 659.
Bennett’s next set of three stages reflects a multicultural or ethnorelativist perspective. A person with a “multicultural worldview” identity will have developed the capacity to differentiate with increasing skill the characteristics of differences and make meaning of life through multiple ethnic lenses resulting from culturally influenced worldviews. The multicultural identity recognizes the bias of a single worldview due to culture and expands the possibilities of how a person might interpret and make sense of life’s experience, both one’s own and others. The transformative multicultural worldview would also embrace these differences as resources to make meaning. Understanding the distinction and paradigm shift between these two perspectives—monocultural and multicultural—is essential to intercultural sensitivity development.

**Monocultural Worldviews**

The first phase in Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is called “Denial.” Simply stated, a person makes sense of cultural differences by denying that differences exist. Everyone holds, or should hold, the same worldview. As such, there are no discernable differences due to culture. Therefore, culture cannot influence beliefs, belief systems, behaviors, feelings, and so forth, and, idealistically, everyone should feel, believe, think and behave the same.

The second phase in the developmental model Bennett calls “Defense.” This ethnocentric worldview finds that a way to make sense of differences is to defend a particular worldview as the best or true way of thinking, acting and feeling. Cross-cultural sojourners can find themselves feeling threatened and defending their “home”

---

121 V. Friedman and Berthoin Antal; Marsella; Parks Daloz; Hunter; Steven J. Sandage, Mary L Jensen and Daniel Jass, “Relational Spirituality and Transformation: Risking Intimacy and Alterity,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1, no. 2 (2008): 182-206.
culture as better, as a way to make sense of the differences that they confront. They can also do the reverse. They find themselves defending the “host” culture as better. In both cases, the defensive position is that one worldview is better than another. They do not yet have the skill or enough capacity to critically evaluate from multiple frames of reference the virtues and vices of the similarities and the differences.

Bennett’s third phase is “Minimization.” This view agrees that there are cultural differences. It minimizes, however, the differences and emphasizes the universal similarities and the impact of culture on deep and complex worldview components. This perspective believes that humanity does have surface differences due to culture; however, what lies below these surface differences are universal similarities or essential human values, standards and conditions that we all (should) have in common. The orientation offers consideration and sympathy to all worldviews, but assumes that, for example, what one considers as good is what all others should also consider as good and as a universal truth. There is a universal worldview in this orientation.

A person with a Minimization orientation would say, for example, that there is a single answer and description about what is true love and how love is authentically felt and shown, and that it is universally received and valued in the same manner. Another example of this perspective is the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do to you. The tension with this ethnocentric perspective occurs when people are crossing cultures. What one worldview understands or values as “good,” another worldview may not understand or experience as “good.” Thus, to encourage worldview development toward a multicultural perspective, the intercultural educator might suggest that the sojourner consider the Platinum Rule: Do unto others as they would want done to them.
To apply the Platinum Rule the sojourner must learn from people from the host culture what and how they ascribe meaning to behavior, symbols and other particulars of the culture.

The tendency of this Minimization worldview, then, is to organize cultural differences into categories familiar to what one knows in one’s own culture. One’s own worldview (influenced by one’s culture) is the central worldview from which the person projects onto how others from a different ethnic experience should view and live life, not being aware that culture does indeed influence one’s worldview. That is why Bennett describes this worldview as ethnocentric.

**Multicultural Worldviews**

The shift into the fourth phase on the worldview model is an important one as sojourners consider their development toward greater cross-cultural sensitivity and competency. It is at this point that individuals can move from an ethnocentric or monocultural worldview to an ethnorelative or multicultural worldview.

The fourth phase is “Acceptance.” This position believes that humans are different and similar and accepts that how people judge the value or truth of these differences is connected to the cultural context in which humans reside. It accepts these differences and values them in their context, seeking to understand the patterns of thinking and the cultural belief systems and values that influence the differences.

This phase and theory, however, does not mean that with an acceptance of the differentness the sojourner diminishes his or her own belief system and convictions in order to be an effective cross-cultural sojourner. Bennett does not promote that people become chameleons, relativists or uncritical multiculturalists. “A state of ethnorelativism
does not imply an ethical agreement with all differences nor a disavowal of stating (and acting upon) a preference for one worldview over another,” he qualifies. “Acceptance does not mean agreement.” Rather, he understands that people who become savvy cross-cultural sojourners develop the habit of asking questions and reflecting on what they are observing and learning, processing the differences that challenge their own worldview:

It is naïve to think that intercultural sensitivity and competence is always associated with liking other cultures or agreeing with their values or ways of life. In fact, the uncritical agreement with other cultures is more characteristic of the ethnocentric condition of Reversal, particularly if it is accompanied by a critical view of your own culture. Some cultural differences may be judged negatively—but the judgment is not ethnocentric unless it is associated with simplification, or withholding equal humanity.

Bennett assumes that humans can shift their worldview. People can seek to understand beliefs, feelings and behaviors from multiple perspectives. People do not, however, have to exchange their entire worldview with each new exposure to a new way of making meaning. In fact, Milstein found that sojourners who rated their intercultural experience as a challenge significantly increased their communication self-efficacy and the rate of increase was significantly correlated to their challenge rating. In other words, as the subjects embraced the challenge of cultural differences and dissonance in this particular intercultural experience, they believed themselves more capable of communicating their belief in their abilities “to organize and execute the actions required to manage

122 M. Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism,” 46


124 Ibid.

125 Milstein, 228.
prospective situations and produce given attainments.”\textsuperscript{126} This increased self-efficacy belief enabled them to become more engaged in processing the epistemological sojourn challenges.\textsuperscript{127} Bennett warns, however, that “to figure out how to maintain ethical commitment in the face of such relativity”\textsuperscript{128} is a major challenge to resolve in the Acceptance orientation.

People with an Acceptance orientation in Bennett’s worldview model, then, accept the contextual influence of both the other worldview and their own. This worldview accepts that culture deeply influences worldview. With this worldview, sojourners gain the skill to interact with these perceived differences productively and to communicate and collaborate effectively with others from a distinctly different worldview and cultural experience. Curiosity about and respect for cultural differences expand, as well as the skill to differentiate between multiple cultures, especially one’s own. The relational challenges that can come from this kind of intimacy and alterity, however, become epistemologically and spiritually transformative.\textsuperscript{129} This is why developing the skill of reflective cultural self-awareness to recognize and understand the foundation of one’s own worldview is critical to trying to understand the worldview of another.

The fifth orientation in Bennett’s intercultural sensitivity theory is “Adaptation.” This view supports the skill of actually adapting one’s ways of thinking, acting and

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{126} Ibid., 222.
\footnotetext{127} Ibid., 235.
\footnotetext{128} M. Bennett, “Becoming Interculturally Competent,” 69.
\footnotetext{129} Sandage, Jensen and Jass.
\end{footnotes}
feeling to another’s worldview and culture. It is more than just being able to eat food from another culture and not wake up in the night with indigestion. It is the skill of actually being able, for example, to take on the patterns of thinking similar to people in another culture. A person in the Adaptation orientation develops the skill to intentionally shift affectively, behaviorally and cognitively from different cultural orientations.

The final domain and multicultural worldview orientation is “Integration.” Integration in Bennett’s theory means that a person becomes so competent at accepting and adapting to multiple cultures that the sojourner actually creates a third culture by integrating multiple cultural perspectives. People in this orientation are always becoming a part of and apart from particular cultures. In some cases, people with an integrated worldview find themselves on the margins of their own and another’s culture. A third culture is created that does not physically exist other than in the sojourner. Few people, Bennett posits, live in this multicultural orientation.

Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity offers sojourners a theoretical framework by which to recognize and describe their worldview perspectives. It also helps sojourners to articulate goals for how to develop intercultural competencies, such as listening for accuracy, empathy, curiosity, tolerance for ambiguity, and so forth. The intercultural educator’s challenge is to more deeply understand the phenomenon and definition of intercultural competence and how to support the sojourner in this highly experiential goal. Bennett’s model offers a theoretical framework by which to explain and observe the phenomenon.
Table 3.1. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnocentric</th>
<th>Multicultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The experience of one’s own beliefs and behaviors (culture) as “just the way things are”</td>
<td>The experience of one’s beliefs and behaviors (culture) as one’s organization of reality among many viable possibilities (other cultures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blissful Ignorance</td>
<td>Negative Reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness of cultural difference and/or lack of interest in cultural difference</td>
<td>Feeling threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cultures are not noticed, or construed vaguely (“foreigner” or “immigrant,” “Asian” or “African”)</td>
<td>Us / them polarization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive stereotyping of one’s own culture, negative stereotyping of others</td>
<td>Sympathy – doing unto others as you would have them do unto you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One example of the use of the measurement tool that grew out of Bennett’s DMIS, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), is a study of the intercultural development of high school students who studied abroad for ten-months. Using a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-measurement of a control and treatment group, Hammer observed the participants’ worldview changes. The treatment was the study abroad experience. Because of the study’s similarities to this thesis study, it can offer a comparative degree of growth of a somewhat similar population. The study’s statistical findings are that the treatment group showed significant change as compared to the control group, though the change remained in the monocultural domain, indicating a continued surface level of understanding culture.¹³⁰

A second example of the use of the IDI in an educational setting is with seminary students enrolled in a required course that addresses the influence of culture on Christianity and Christians influence on cultural and spiritual transformation. The study’s setting is Bethel Seminary, which is part of Bethel University and the setting for this thesis study. The Seminary study tests the relationship of pedagogy to support the development of intercultural competence. Harden observed the influence of the approaches and content to support the goal to “identify effective approaches for addressing prejudice, stereotyping, and ideologies such as racism, sexism, and classism” among students and faculty at Bethel Seminary.¹³¹ The content included teaching Bennett’s DMIS as a framework to reach these goals. The IDI was the measurement tool.


The quasi-experimental design required students to complete a pre- and post-test measurement to observe intercultural competence changes.

The finding from this three-year study (2004 to 2006) supports an "interdisciplinary approach that increases intercultural awareness and sensitivity around issues of differences that often lead to intergroup conflict and perpetuate stereotypic and prejudiced behaviors and intergroup conflict over differences as compared with other common approaches."\(^\text{132}\) The report defined multidisciplinary content in the following way:

1. Lectures and video tapes about ethnic minority values and unique cultural patterns;
2. Readings about ethnic theological perspectives, a brief history of ethnic groups, theoretical cultural dimensions that provided a conceptual framework for understanding cultural differences of their own ethnic identity, power and privilege in pluralistic cultures, and Bennett’s theoretical model (DMIS) to provide them with analytical tools;
3. Classroom discussions where students reflected on their life experiences with other ethnic groups, their own ethnic experience, and cases studies;
4. Course assignments that include writing about a cross-cultural experience during the term, analyzing and solving a cross-cultural problem, and responses to the readings of other ethnic groups;
5. Lectures and exercises related to understanding the psychology of differences;
6. Skill-building for effective intercultural interaction.\(^\text{133}\)

The study found that using an interdisciplinary approach and a model that recognizes the developmental issues related to group and individual differences supported the tensions students and faculty experienced in the teaching and learning experience, regardless of their developmental history around these issues. Harden also observed that when the tension is not addressed while students are confronting these turbulent

\(^{132}\) Harden, 2.

\(^{133}\) Harden, 3.
multicultural issues, the experience “can be counter-productive and inadvertently make things worse.” Harden emphasized the importance of instructors knowing and using “best practices for increasing individual capacity for positive intergroup or intercultural interaction when addressing issues of difference or diversity.” This study’s findings further support the value of and need for empirical research about the relationship between pedagogy and effective learning about culture, religion and spirituality, if the goal is development of intercultural competence.

Competency Component Development

Darla Deardorff conducted a study to hone the field’s construct of the definition and components of intercultural competence, questioning 23 leading internationally-known intercultural studies scholars:

The top-rated definition described intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” There were numerous other statements developed by the experts regarding intercultural competence that received 85% or higher agreement, including the ability to shift one’s frame of reference appropriately, the ability to achieve one’s goals to some degree and the ability to behave appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations. Most of these definitions focus primarily on issues of communication and behavior in intercultural situations.

The significance of this study, Deardorff notes, lies in the fact that these experts unanimously agree that an important characteristic or component of a person who is

134 Harden, 2.
135 Harden, 2.
137 Deardorff, “Intercultural Competence: A Definition, Model and Implications for Education Abroad,” 33.
identified as interculturally competent has the ability to understand another’s worldview. This finding is substantiated in the literature as well, observes Deardorff.\textsuperscript{138}

Another surprising finding in this survey is that at the top of the list of components are the general cross-cultural skills, rather than specific cross-cultural skills (e.g., language learning). These higher-rated general skills of cross-cultural competence are analyzing, interpreting, relating, listening and observing.\textsuperscript{139} The rating of these skills speaks to intercultural educators’ shifting acknowledgment of “the importance of going beyond knowledge acquisition to knowledge processing and application.”\textsuperscript{140} Deep transformation will take place when sojourners choose to experientially explore the mysterious crevices of differing worldviews.

From the results of her consensus-seeking study, Deardorff designed a “Process Model of Intercultural Competence” that attempts to take into account the deep complexities of this developmental task of becoming interculturally competent, and the task to assess this growth. In many ways, Deardorff’s process model supports and expands upon Bennett’s model, as summarized in Table 3.1. The commonalities are clear. The distinction between the two is that Bennett emphasizes worldview orientation development and Deardorff emphasizes competency component development. Integrating the two enhances and more clearly defines and describes the intercultural educator’s and sojourner’s goals. Deardorff’s model focus is the skill sets and Bennett’s is worldview orientation.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 33-34.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 35.
Deardorff’s Process Model of Intercultural Competence includes a cyclical framework of three categories that present themselves in external and internal ways. While the framework is primarily cyclical, the categories also interact with each other during the process. Unlike Bennett’s DMIS, Deardorff’s process model is not sequential. As one area increases, it influences another area’s capacity to increase. The fundamental inception or entrance to developing intercultural competence, Deardorff observes, is “Attitude.” The key attitudes are respect, openness, curiosity and discovery. “Knowledge and Comprehension,” the second category following Attitude, aims at gaining self-awareness of one’s own culture, that of another culture, and the addition of sociolinguistic awareness. The third category is “Skills.” These are the skills to listen, observe and evaluate, and to analyze, interpret and relate. From these categories the sojourner and others can observe internal and external outcomes. The “Desired Internal Outcomes” are an informed frame of reference shift, which implies adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view and empathy. Though cyclical and unending, the final place in Deardorff’s model is the “Desired External Outcome.” This is the display of “effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation.”

The limitations of this framework, Deardorff concedes, are that it comes from a primarily western bias and from the forced consensus of the study’s participants.

Finally, Deardorff identifies five implications from her study for intercultural educators that inform the intervention design of this thesis. Deardorff’s first implication is the “Importance of Preparation and Support” during the experience and continued

---

141 Ibid., 36.
142 Ibid., 40.
support after the experience. Key to this preparation and support is the use of a theoretical framework by which sojourners can process their experiences. As so many intercultural educators herald, if the goal is intercultural competence, sojourners must participate in a holistic preparation for the intercultural experience, one that introduces students to the potential cultural dissonance and a framework to process the serendipitous experiences and worldview challenges that sojourners will confront. Not only must the student sojourner be prepared and supported, asserts Deardorff, so too must the leader. The facilitator/teacher must be prepared and moving forward in his or her deep intercultural competence transformation. This preparation for all sojourners, Deardorff exclaims, “is essential and it behooves administrators to be intentional about the learning support given to pre-, during and post-experiences abroad.”

A second implication for intercultural educators is the “Importance of Skills Development.” From Deardorff’s consensus study, three crucial skills emerge, beginning with “observation, coupled with the skills of analyzing and evaluating. Of the main knowledge components to emerge, the only item upon which all the intercultural experts agreed is the ability to see from others’ perspectives.” Working from the assumption that humans are not naturally inclined to deeply explore why there is a difference from another’s perspective, “the assumptions underlying attitudes must be challenged.” This is the skill of critical thinking: the sojourner must take the risk to

\[143\] Ibid., 42-43.
\[144\] Ibid., 43.
\[145\] Ibid.
\[146\] Ibid.
\[147\] Ibid., 43; M. Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism, 21.
examine the unexamined in order for transformational development to occur. This requires deliberate and focused reflection. Deardorff implores the use of specific frameworks by which sojourners can identify, analyze and evaluate their assumptions.

Deardorff’s model of intercultural development makes clear that reflection is an essential habit to develop if the goal is transformative multicultural identity development.148 Demonstrating the importance of Deardorff’s finding through pedagogy, Karen Drake, an intercultural educator in the field of nursing education, employs a reflective processing framework referred to as the “Cultural Learning Cycle.”149 Drake’s framework supports Deardorff’s third and fourth implications, which are the Importance of Reflection or mindfulness and the Importance of Meaningful Intercultural Interaction.150 Deliberate reflective practice will develop mindful behavior and thinking. Deliberate reflection can support sojourners’ ability to expand their understanding and skills for coping with differences that are reflexive and analytical rather than reactive and simplistic. Focused and deliberate reflection supports culture learning as a complex and a sophisticated understanding of how culture influences dynamic worldview development.

The need for reflection will be minimal, however, if meaningful interaction with those from other cultures does not happen during the sojourn. It is essential that a sojourner engage in meaningful interactions and relationships with indigenous people in order to develop deep transformative knowledge about one’s own and other’s worldview.


Kenneth Pike describes this engagement as “the emic road toward conscious knowledge.” He explains:

The relation of myself to the outside world includes my relation not only to physical elements outside of me, but to minds and language of people outside of me. I suggest, therefore, that our entrance point into an understanding of our knowledge of the world as a whole may best be achieved by looking at the interaction between people within the context of the society around them (which they in part comprise) and within the physical world around them (and of which they also are a part).

This is also the experience of alterity during which people from two different worldviews take the risk to intimately explore their differences, willingly wrestling with the crucible of ambiguity that deep differences will cause to surface.

A crucible is the metaphor Shults, Sandage, Jensen and Jass use to describe the experience of deep spiritual transformation in which one takes the risk to engage in relational intimacy and alterity, learning to differentiate one’s own worldview with the differentness of another’s. “A crucible,” they so aptly describe, “is a container for holding the process of intense heat and pressure that can transform raw materials and catalytic agents into new forms.” In their interdisciplinary study of this transformational spirituality, and supportive of Bennett’s DMIS theory, the colleagues posit the assumptions that this experience is holistic, developmental, integrated hermeneutically and intercultural. For the cross-cultural sojourner, then, the container is the critical incident. It is the place of reflection and the relationship with someone from a distinctly

---


152 Ibid., 2.

153 Sandage, Jensen and Jass, 193-95; Shults and Sandage, 31-36.

different worldview. The new form is the revised or shifted worldview and the potential for a developing multicultural identity. Educators can offer and promote these crucible opportunities and the support sojourners need to process the experiences; sojourners, however, must be willing to take the risk to step into and dwell in the crucible container. A balance of seeking and dwelling is crucial for mature spiritual transformation.155 Sojourners will more likely do so if they know how to reflectively process the crucible and have relational support, often serving as a cultural mentor or bridge.

Deardorff’s concluding implication from her consensus study of leading intercultural scholars and their definition of intercultural competence is the “Importance of Assessment of Learning.”156 In her 2008 discussion, Deardorff reports that interculturalists have developed over 85 assessment tools to identify and measure intercultural competence.157 In addition, intercultural experts agree that the top three methods for assessment are case studies, interviews and a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures.158 She concedes that there “is not one tool or method that can assess the whole of intercultural competency.”159 A finding of note is that there was not agreement among the experts about the value of the pre- and post-measurement, which is a common research design in the field. She attributes this to the growing recognition of the complexity of the process of intercultural learning and assessment, encouraging

---

155 Sandage, Jensen and Jass, 195-98; Shults and Sandage, 31-36.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
educators to continue to examine current assessment practices. Reasons for the importance of assessment is missing from Deardorff’s explanation of this final implication.

Cultural Learning Cycle and the Emic-Etic Interchange

Supporting Deardorff’s findings, Drake’s grounded theory study discovered a reflective framework by which sojourners successfully processed their study abroad experience during immersion and reentry and with increasing proficiency as they used the framework. Its use supported the acceleration of intercultural sensitivity and competency in senior baccalaureate nursing students. Drake named this framework the “Cultural Learning Cycle” (CLC). It is the primary reflective framework that this thesis study employs.

The Cultural Learning Cycle, like Deardorff’s Process Model for Intercultural Competence, starts with where sojourners are in their own culture learning development. To process the central phenomenon of cultural differences, Drake’s study showed that students used a reflective action and interaction process of anticipating, noticing, contemplating, and learning. Students applied this process during their intercultural preparation, immersion and reentry and for a wide range of categories and experiences of cultural differences. It was not only using this framework, however, that was key to the acceleration of the students’ intercultural sensitivity and competency. Drake also found that the key determining factor for the growing understanding of the complexity of

---

160 Ibid.

161 Drake, “The Role of Short Study Abroad”.

104
culture and the participants’ responses to it was through the use of an Emic-Etic Interchange imbedded in the CLC framework, supporting and utilizing Pike’s linguistic study.

The CLC pattern of reflection guides sojourners to reflect about their experience in three ways: to become self-aware, culture-aware and other-aware. Through the development of the habit of seeking emic (insider) and etic (outsider) culture perspectives, Drake found that sojourners define, strengthen, discover and develop their self and other cultural awareness:

The concepts of emic (phonemic) and etic (phonetic) are derived from the field of Phonetics. They have come to have the following meaning in intercultural studies. Emic is the view of a culture from the inside looking out. It is the insider view. Etic is the view of the culture from the outside looking in. It is the outside view. In reality both views are important in the big picture understanding of a culture—the metaview that includes both the insider and outsider perspective.162

Clearly, Drake applies the Emic and Etic Interchange beyond that of language, as is often the case due to its origins in Pike’s linguistic and anthropological study.163 Rather, and as Pike intended, Drake employs this interchange for the sake of exploring a critical understanding of the deep and unknown crevices of cultural differences.164 It also supports and informs the unnatural task of being open to and seeking an explanation for cultural differences, especially those areas that stir the greatest emotion and


164 Pike.
dissonance.\textsuperscript{165} The Emic-Etic Interchange embedded within Drake’s Cultural Learning Cycle supports the task that Deardorff and colleagues identify as the second most important component of intercultural competency: cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment.\textsuperscript{166}

The first of the four reflective habits in Drake’s Cultural Learning Cycle is “Anticipating.” Sojourners reflect on what they might romanticize, idealize and imagine they will experience (cognitively, behaviorally, affectively) during their cross-cultural journey. Though what they anticipate lacks the reality of what the experience might be like, sojourners can experience real emotions and thoughts in response to what they anticipate, gaining some practice in coping with what they might actually experience. As is true for all places in the cycle, sojourners can do this before they leave home, during their journey, before they are about to do something new and as they anticipate their return home. During the Anticipating reflection, the primary perspective is the etic view of the other culture with the sojourners as the outsider to the host culture. Sojourners may consciously or unconsciously make comparisons to their culture, identifying own-culture characteristics. This is an emic perspective of their own culture.

At the “Noticing” places in the cycle, during the immersion experience sojourners develop the skills of noticing and observing sensory stimuli (e.g., hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and cognitively responding to what they are experiencing when in a situation that is unfamiliar. The sojourners’ goal is to develop the habit to notice the tension or stress that they are experiencing, to notice that the sensory experience is


\textsuperscript{166} Deardorff, “Intercultural Competence,” 34.
different from their familiar experiences in their own culture, and to notice how they are responding to the stimuli. This is the place for sojourners to ask themselves, “How do I feel?” “Do I feel: Fear? Anger? Sadness? Joy?” These experiences can overwhelm the sojourners’ senses and cognitive processing. This is a characteristic of the critical incident.

The Emic-Etic Interchange is especially at work during this place in the Cultural Learning Cycle, recognizing that an experience is different from the sojourners’ normal experiences and looking for cultural clues and knowledge about the perspectives of their host culture. Looking for knowledge from the perspective of the host culture is seeking an emic perspective. By Noticing, sojourners are strengthening their understanding of their etic view of the host culture’s perspective. Moving back and forth between one’s own perspectives and those of the host culture is what makes it an Emic-Etic Interchange.

Drake’s research suggests that when sojourners deeply notice and dwell in their emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive experience with the unfamiliar, then they are ready to move to the next stage.¹⁶⁷ Sandage and colleagues also support the importance of dwelling in the crucible moment for deep transformative change to take place, especially that of relational spiritual transformation.¹⁶⁸ For the transformational intercultural worldview experience, deeply noticing means to holistically consider and wrestle with the diverse cultural perspectives and what exists in the sojourner’s worldview that

¹⁶⁷ Drake, “The Role of Short Study Abroad,” 193.

¹⁶⁸ Sandage, Jensen and Jass.
challenges what is “real” to him or her. This crucible experience calls for skills in negotiating reality.\textsuperscript{169}

“Contemplating” is the pivotal and third place in the Cultural Learning Cycle.\textsuperscript{170} At this phase of reflection, explains Drake, sojourners are still defining and clarifying what happened and why they respond emotionally, behaviorally and cognitively. She observed:

This was not a passing through, but rather a deep continued mental dwelling on that which was noticed. Students considered the issues from both sides, their own cultural viewpoint that was challenged and by what they noticed in the host culture. Students struggled or wrestled with the two world views while they sought to find answers they could accept for what they have noticed.\textsuperscript{171}

At this reflection phase, Drake found that sojourners moved through three types of reflection and action. The first was defining or clarifying what they noticed. Second, the sojourners began to search for meaning for themselves and to compare and contrast what the event might mean to those in the host culture as compared to themselves. Finally, participants sought internal and external processing with emic and etic explanations for making-meaning of the differences.\textsuperscript{172} Drake observed that the participants grew in their cultural awareness skill:

In the early stage of their study abroad, this comparison was between their etic view of the host culture and their emic view of their own culture. Later the comparison was between their budding emic view of the host culture and etic view of their own culture.\textsuperscript{173}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Friedman and Berthoin Antal; Marsella.
\item Drake, “The Role of Short Study Abroad,” 194.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
They searched for meaning to explain the critical incident using this crucial intercultural habit of the Emic-Etic Interchange. This meaning-making, as Drake observed, happens through the interchange of intrapersonal reflection, interpersonal dialogue and support of the host culture mentors and friends.

Intercultural communication scholar and practitioner Edward T. Hall argues that this kind of emic-etic “interface has proved fruitful because contrasting and conflicting patterns are revealed. It tells as much about tacit-acquired culture as it does about manifest culture.” He goes on to emphasize that “it is frequently the only way I know of gathering valid cultural data on the out-of-awareness, virtually automatic, tacit-acquired side of life.”174 Deardorff also concludes that taking the time to contemplate is a crucial opportunity to develop meaningful cultural interaction with the people of the host culture.175 Hosts can become sojourners’ cultural mentors or bridges to further define and strengthen their emic perspectives of the host culture and their emic and etic perspectives of their own culture. It is in these times that sojourns can begin to develop empathy, respect and understanding, supporting a worldview shift toward greater and deeper multicultural perspectives and competency.

Contemplating takes time and is circular in how sojourners might process their experiences, observes Drake. Sojourners notice more cultural differences to reflect upon and to seek explanations of meaning. Drake found that even in a three-and-a-half-week period, students showed increased capabilities to contemplate the differences as they


175 Deardorff, “Intercultural Competence,” 45.
practiced this metacognitive habit, taking in more complex emic perspectives from their host culture.

For the “Learning” and fourth reflective habit in the Cultural Learning Cycle, sojourners are starting to accept, find meaning, and resolve the tensions they are experiencing about the unfamiliar. They are no longer asking many questions; rather, they are stating conclusions about their learning, and then reflecting on their conclusions. Drake found that sojourners make statements such as, “What I think I learned about this difference is . . .” Drake also found that her participants validated their conclusions based on what they had verified from host culture friends. Thus, through teaching Drake’s reflective pattern with the Emic-Etic Interchange, sojourners can start to explain why the people of their host culture behave and value something. They might even be able to anticipate a host culture’s behavior or reaction to an event. Using Drake’s framework, however, suggests that sojourners are also more likely to confirm their conclusion by developing the habit of seeking an explanation and confirmation from the host culture perspective and define and strengthen their understanding of their own culture. This is the intercultural competence of listening for accuracy. This skill is a key characteristic of a multicultural identity.

The genius of Drake’s Cultural Learning Cycle is its portable and adaptable quality. It supports the needed processing for all topics, degrees and developmental stages of cultural dissonance that sojourners might experience. Most importantly, it seeks and supports a growing self, culture and other awareness, along with an understanding of why and how differences occur through meaning-making reflection and relational cross-cultural dialogue.
Studies and theories such as Drake’s, Deardorff’s and Bennett’s are the primary sources of theoretical and pedagogical support that inform and motivate the focus and design of this thesis study. If deep, long-lasting learning and change are to take place through the investment of cross-cultural sojourns, sojourners must expand their capacity and courage to understand their own and others’ worldviews. For true transformation, sojourners must learn how to increase in their ability to productively and effectively engage with differences that challenge their worldview. The educational quest is how to both challenge and support sojourners in this task to take the risk in this uncharted transformational and developmental journey.176

**Spiritual and Religious Orientation**

While a body of intercultural education literature is growing in the area of worldview development, its scope and depth has not yet explored a core element of worldview development: spiritual and religious beliefs and belief systems. Studies have been conducted on the relationship of religious orientation and sojourner adjustment, acculturation, dogmatism, prejudice and fundamentalism.177 In addition, a growing body of literature explores the role of intercultural interaction, spirituality and interfaith


dialogue.\textsuperscript{178} Also of note is that particular fields are exploring the relationship of spirituality and religion as they relate to professional skill development, fields such as nursing, social work, counseling, education and business management.\textsuperscript{179} In fact, Hage, Hopson, Siege, Payton, and DeFanti investigate and affirm that professional counselor preparation neglects the spiritual diversity dimension, especially as it relates to counselors’ multicultural competency.\textsuperscript{180} Still, little focus is given to processing the deep spiritual and religious convictions during the sojourn as a way to develop toward a multicultural personality.

Empirical research that most closely investigates the role of spirituality and religion in intercultural development is found in the field of missiology and in peace studies that focus on interfaith dialogue. What seems most closely related and relevant to this thesis study are findings about the role of religious orientation and adjustment.

Navara and James studied the acculturative stress of missionaries, asking if religious orientation (intrinsic, extrinsic and quest) affects religious coping and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Hage et al.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
adjustment. They found that “in many ways, missionary acculturation follows a similar stress/coping model as other sojourner groups.”\textsuperscript{181} Their findings inform this thesis of the significant relationships between religious orientation as predictive of perceived stress and those with perceived stress and religious coping behavior. Specifically, Navara and James found that those missionaries with a religious orientation (intrinsic and quest) that supported religious coping behavior, such as praying, seeking pastoral support, trusting in God, and so forth, had a lower rating of perceived stress. This finding could inform the results of this thesis study related to subjects’ processing of their intercultural and epistemological stress, the subjects’ ratings of satisfaction about spiritual growth during their sojourn and their satisfaction with their experience. It could also suggest that particular religious orientations could spend less emotional and psychological energy on adjustment and more attention to exploration of deep understandings of the complexities of cultural differences and worldview implications. Still, it offers little firm relationship to growth in intercultural sensitivity and competency.

Hall, Edwards and Hall investigated the relationship between missionaries’ spiritual development, psychological development and cross-cultural adjustment.\textsuperscript{182} Of note in their study is the perspective on the value of spiritual coping as a resource relied upon during the critical incidents experienced during cross-cultural sojourns, especially in a supportive capacity. Hall, Edwards and Hall describe this relationship:

\begin{quote}
Spiritual development represents the unique ways in which people’s spiritual beliefs and experiences have been actualized as resources for coping and meaning-making that operate through, and even transform the ego functions. . . . From a meaning-making perspective, the “I–Though” God relationship
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{181} Navara and James, 39.

\textsuperscript{182} Hall, Edwards and Hall, 193.
experience of many of the world’s theistic religions represents an important meaning-making schema that integrates the meanings of the self, the world, and the future. . . . From a Christian theological perspective, spiritual development also reflects actual spiritual resources and processes that transcend people’s psychological experience, such as God’s role in the spiritual development process.  

The researchers found that spiritual development did show a positive significant relationship to acculturation, described as “ego functions of current object relations, reality testing, regulation and control of instinctual drives, thought processes, and defensive functioning, and to both sociocultural and psychological adjustment.” This finding supports the importance of further research to investigate the processing of spiritual and religious dimensions as supportive of the cultural dissonance experienced in critical incidents.

In 1999, Beers studied United States Christian college students’ spiritual development while participating in a one-month mission trip abroad. Beer’s quasi-experimental study is relevant to this thesis for several reasons. First, the settings for both studies are similar. The colleges are both members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities and similar in mission and curriculum. In addition, the participants are similar in spiritual and religious convictions. Secondly, Beers also studied a control and treatment group, measuring participants’ faith development variables using two closed-ended instruments and an open-ended questionnaire. The control group did not participate in the mission experience abroad. The treatment was the mission experience abroad. In contrast, the treatment for this thesis project is voluntary learning about intercultural dimensions and development and the voluntary practice of a particular reflection pattern to process

---

183 Ibid., 197.
184 Ibid.
cross-cultural critical incidents. Both Beer’s study and this study emphasized a key learning factor in experiential learning: reflection. Beers does not, however, specify how he applied this to the study group other than gathering qualitative pre and post-experience data. The specific open-ended questions asked about mostly faith development and two specific questions about what they learned from “my host culture personnel” and about cross-cultural education.185

Using a mixed-method design, Beer’s qualitative data showed that participants developed “their relationship with God and their service to others.”186 The quantitative data showed no significant spiritual growth. It did show, however, that participants experienced significant changes in becoming more accepting of people with different religious beliefs. While there are several similarities and some distinct differences between Beer’s study and this thesis’, Beers’ last finding does suggest that this thesis’ alternative hypothesis assertion is reasonable. It also supports the need for further research regarding the processing of the cross-cultural experience and demonstrated intercultural development.

The emerging field of Peace Studies is also in dialogue and investigation about the spiritual and religious dimensions related to intercultural competence. Employing Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as his training approach and assessment framework for interreligious groups and conflict resolution, Abu-Nimer investigated the “importance and uniqueness of religious attitudes and

---

185 Beers, 65-66.

186 Beers, Abstract, x.
settings in intercultural exchanges.” With this interreligious group, Abu-Nimer observed that the respondents’ belief systems significantly influenced their ability to engage with and develop toward the next worldview orientation in Bennett’s model. What surfaced when Abu-Nimer integrated spirituality with the affective, behavioral and cognitive skill sets was the deep dynamic that spirituality and religious beliefs play in an effort to increase interreligious tolerance, understanding and dialogue. His findings suggest that if the intercultural educator’s goal is to increase intercultural competence, a sojourner’s preparation and support requires the integration of spirituality and religion in order to process this deep epistemological dynamic of worldview orientation and development.

As is examined in this thesis study, Abu-Nimer deliberately included in his training objectives the exploration of “how religion had helped to construct [the participants’] world-view and how it shapes their value system.” Specifically, and at the suggestion of the participants, they integrated as a central and interconnected component in the DMIS the role of spirituality in the development of the cognitive, affective and behavioral skills set to support intercultural competency development. Using a triangle as the image, they placed the respective skill set at each corner of the triangle and placed “spiritual” in the center, suggesting that spirituality influences and interconnects each of the skill sets.

Abu-Nimer used the DMIS with the following objective:

To increase the participants’ awareness of how limited their tolerance and interreligious interaction is (both cognitively and behaviorally) and to explore the

---

187 Abu-Nimer, 688.
188 Ibid., 689.
group’s vision of interreligious relations and dialogue. Thus, participants are asked to identify their attitudes toward other religious groups using the proposed developmental model.189

Overall, the DMIS did prove useful to support the training objective to increase interreligious competency.

Abu-Nimer noted several limitations, however, in his use of the DMIS. Of note were the participants’ responses to Bennett’s explanation of Reversal, Acceptance and Adaptation worldview orientations. Abu-Nimer’s noted that some participants concluded that Reversal would mean they would need to convert to another religion. Reversal is a posture of giving superiority to the other culture, or religion for Abu-Nimer’s participants. This is a significant challenge to anyone’s worldview. He explained it in this way:

Conversion might involve denigrating one’s previous culture or insisting on the superiority of the new one; however, conversion in an interreligious interaction is often perceived as an abandonment of the current faith and adoption of a new faith, and denigration or superiority are not necessarily components of this response, as suggested by many participants.190

From a spiritual and religious experience, this development is not just a worldview shift but a worldview abandonment. Abu-Nimer notes that his participants’ response might suggest a low level of religious differentiation, not being able to feel loyal to one’s own convictions while at the same time seeking to understand the beliefs of another religion. Still, the challenge is significant. Abu-Nimer asserts that Bennett’s DMIS discussion “does not address this distinction sufficiently.”191 Abu-Nimer’s conclusions suggests that

189 Ibid., 697.

190 Ibid., 698.

191 Ibid., 697.
specific attention must be given to how to negotiate this affective response as sojourners confront the cognitive challenge of belief system differences. Intercultural educators need to study more deeply how to support sojourners’ processing spiritual and religious beliefs if the goal is to support sojourners’ movement toward transformative worldview development.

Abu-Nimer also noted that most participants disagreed with the idea of the Acceptance worldview orientation, understanding it to promote a relativist framework whereby there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. While he conceded that it could be that the participants were not yet able to shift to understand or experience another’s worldview as a possible viable worldview explanation, he also offered an alternative explanation. Simply stated, in the interreligious settings, “the moral and spiritual dimensions of the identity add more difficulty to the persons’ ability to move from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative stage (than in a cultural or non-spiritual setting).”

Although Abu-Nimer asserts that his context of study is unique, moral and spiritual dimensions reside in every worldview, not just the interreligious setting. Beliefs and belief systems are at the core of every person’s worldview. Therefore, Abu-Nimer’s critique of the DMIS and its accompanying measurement tool is worthy of consideration for all settings, whether religious or not. As some might conclude, Abu-Nimer’s observations does not have to mean that spiritual or religious people are unable to develop the same effective and productive intercultural competence as defined in Deardorff’s discussion. Rather, as is the conviction of this researcher, it requires focused

---

192 Ibid., 699.
challenge and support that directly speaks to sojourners’ developmental and transformative processing of spiritual and religious sensibilities.

Though Abu-Nimer did find the DMIS a useful model to support his training objectives, he does challenge the successful applicability of the DMIS to interreligious training as a way to develop interreligious competency. Participants agreed that while it may be possible to empathize and adapt to another culture in behavioral, cognitive and affective ways, it is impossible to temporarily shift “one’s religious identity or credibility in their community.”193 Only one of the seventy participants could imagine this possibility. Thus, Abu-Nimer poses two questions worthy of consideration as intercultural educators continue to employ the DMIS as a developmental and assessment model to support growth in intercultural sensitivity and competency. The first question is whether a person could make a temporary religious shift between two or more religious beliefs, as is suggested in Bennett’s explanation of the multicultural worldview stages. The second question is “whether such ability should be perceived as preferable to a single but tolerant set of beliefs, as in the Acceptance phase?”194 Intercultural educators must explore these questions with fellow educators and researchers as they continue to use Bennett’s DMIS and the interpretation of the measurement tool, the Intercultural Developmental Inventory.

There is evidence that academia is starting to encourage this exploration. As a result of a 2005 forum sponsored by the Society for Values in Higher Education, scholars produced a document to encourage institutions of higher education to implore that the

193 Ibid., 700.

194 Ibid., 700.
academia explore how to teach about religion and spirituality that embraces diverse convictions for the sake of strengthening democracy and “preserving standards of intellectual inquiry, public reason, and academic freedom.” Encouraging, too, is the first publication of the 2009 peer-reviewed periodical *Beliefs and Values*. Its goal is “to facilitate sustained and dynamic dialogue” around the issues of beliefs and values, specifically stating two of its six areas of emphasis as “global education” and “religious and cultural understanding.”

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, a review of literature unearths little empirical research on the processing of spiritual and religious orientation during the intercultural sojourn for how it might contribute toward the development of intercultural competence. Yet, this is the area, Bennett exclaims, that “is the most problematic and threatening idea that many of us ever encounter.” This absence of research and Bennett’s challenge is the catalyst for this researcher’s curiosity. It is also personal experience with the phenomena and the conviction that knowing more could make a difference for peaceful relationships across cultures and differences.

---


CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to advance the knowledge of the relationship between processing spiritual and religious critical incidents experienced during cross-cultural immersions and developing intercultural sensitivity and competency. Therefore, a postpositive methodology is the philosophical assumption on how to best gain this knowledge. The researcher explored this relationship using a quasi-experimental strategy of inquiry. The primary method used to obtain objective comparative measurements from participants regarding their worldview orientations was a theoretically grounded and psychometrically sound instrument. The theory supporting this tool is one of two theories that grounds this research. A second tool was used to gather participants’ self-reported knowledge and opinions regarding demographics, study abroad conditions and their spiritual and religious tension. The researcher designed this second measurement tool. In addition, the researcher designed the study to evaluate control and treatment participants to further observe the influence of the act of processing spiritual and religious critical incidents and the relationship to developing intercultural competence. The researcher also created an intervention. It is a 100-page workbook that treatment participants voluntarily completed. The intervention is grounded on a theory and framework related to processing
the critical incident during a cross-cultural immersion experience. Finally, statistical analysis was applied to the data gathered.

**Research Methodology**

From a literature review in the field of intercultural studies and related fields, this researcher conjectures that there is a likely relationship between the act of processing spirituality and religious tension experienced during alterity and the development of intercultural competency. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between processing spiritual and religious tensions experienced during cross-cultural engagement to that of the development of a multicultural worldview and intercultural competence. The alternative hypothesis \((H_1)\) is that there is a significant correlation between the practice of intentional reflection about one’s spirituality and religion during the critical incidents experienced in a cross-cultural sojourn and that of a change in one’s worldview. (The researcher will use the alternative hypothesis in this thesis.) To clarify, the researcher does not assert a cause and effect relationship; the confounding variables are too numerous in this real-life and complex experience. The goal is to explore the possible relationships in this phenomenon as people actually experience it.\(^{198}\)

Scientific research grounded on theories, also called auxiliary assumptions, is one of the major tenets of postpositive methodology.\(^{199}\) The hypothesis, and therefore the foundation for the research design, is grounded on two theories.


The first theory used in this thesis is Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity\textsuperscript{200} (DMIS) and an accompanying measurement tool, the Intercultural Development Inventory. The tool was used to support the empirical exploration and scientific method. Specifically, this theory is employed to observe, assess and suggest an explanation for the phenomenon of the stages people move along as they may or may not develop from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative worldview orientation due to experiences of cross-cultural alterity. The assumption is that each of the stages involves a growing number and capacity of necessary affective, behavioral and cognitive skills sets, or competencies, that characterizes a person with intercultural sensitivity and competency.

The second theory that grounds the method of this investigation is Karen Drake’s approach to ways that people can process the cross-cultural immersion experience to support accelerated intercultural sensitivity and competency. This reflective processing framework is called the Cultural Learning Cycle and employs an Emic-Etic Interchange as a key practice used to anticipate, notice, contemplate and learn from the critical incidents that cross-cultural sojourners experience.\textsuperscript{201} The Emic-Etic Interchange supports the expansion of cultural awareness of one’s own and others’ cultures, a proposed key to the foundation for intercultural competency development. This thesis researcher offered the treatment group participants thorough written explanation of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity and the Cultural Learning Cycle, encouraging them to use the processing framework during their cross-cultural experience.

\textsuperscript{200} M. Bennett, “Towards Ethnorelativism.”

\textsuperscript{201} Drake, “The Role of Short Study Abroad.”
A second major tenet of postpositivist methodology and its hermeneutic is “to establish procedures and criteria that can support commonly adjudicated truth claims that do not depend solely on those subjectively experienced or believed ‘realities.’” In other words, the researcher must employ an objective means to observe and measure the phenomenon. This thesis researcher chose two tools to support the objectivity tenet. The first tool is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), created by Milton Bennett and Mitchell Hammer. This psychometrically analyzed and objective latent variable tool has alpha scores ranging from 0.80 to 0.85 for each domain it measures. Both the control and intervention participants completed the IDI prior to and in the last week of the immersion experience.

The second tool to support the objectivity tenet is a questionnaire that both the control and intervention participants completed in the last week of their cross-cultural experience: Religious and Spiritual Experience During a Cross-Cultural Study Abroad. The researcher created this questionnaire to gather participants’ self-report information about topics such as demographics, processing, tension and worldview growth. The primary purpose of the tool was to further observe in objective ways what participants said about the factors that empirical research is identifying as confounding variables related to developing intercultural sensitivity and competence. The intention was that it and the Intercultural Development Inventory would offer further objective knowledge about the hypothesis.

---

202 Phillips and Burbules, 35-40.

A final and crucial method to support a postpositive methodology to explore the hypothesis is that the data is subject to quantitative analysis. The researcher applied this hermeneutic using a variety of quantitative measures to test the hypothesis and the reliability and validity of particular observations that surfaced in the questionnaire.

Participants

Protection of Human Participants

Before any potential subjects were invited to participate in this study, in October 2007 the researcher submitted a request to Bethel University’s Institutional Review Board for Research with Humans for approval to use its students as human participants in social and behavioral research. This required approval ensures that the research design and its instruments follow ethical standards of research and treatment of humans under study. Permission was granted in the same month.

In addition, following ethical research standards and as a requirement of Bethel’s Internal Review Board, the researcher secured a consent form from all potential participants as part of the invitation and explanation of the study and prior to participants completing the first measurement tool. All potential participants were told that they were invited to participate in a doctoral study about spiritual, religious and worldview growth during the study abroad experience. No participant was told that they were potential members of a control or treatment group. Data was identified with an identification number and all names and individual information were deleted upon full completion of data collection.
The researcher also sought approval and cooperation to conduct the research from the Bethel University’s College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Associate Dean of Off-Campus and International Studies and the directors and faculty of programs taught or overseen by Bethel. In addition, the Bethel University-CAS Dean of Assessment and Faculty Development funded and supervised the spring 2008 control group research.

**Participant Description**

The total participants for this study included 100 undergraduate university students who studied abroad for a semester term (14 to 17 weeks) and were enrolled in the same university, identified in this thesis as the Home University. The participants studied during three different terms in three different school years: Spring 2008, Spring 2009 and Fall 2009. During the school terms of this research, all students who were studying abroad through the Home University range of programs were invited to voluntarily participate in the study. Only those participants who completed the pre- and post-measurement tools are included in the final analysis. Valid percentages are used to report the participant descriptions.

The participants’ ages ranged from 19 to 50 years old. Seventy-seven percent were 20 and 21 years old and 3 percent were 24 or older. Seventy-five percent were female and 90.2 percent were Caucasian. For 52.2 percent of the participants, their major required them to study abroad. Tables 4.1 and 4.3 show the regions in which participants studied. They are grouped by culture regions and show a breakdown between the control and treatment group. The total participants’ leading culture regions of study are

---

Europe (39.0 percent), Latin America (29.0 percent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (17.0 percent).

Table 4.1. Study abroad culture regions, total participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURE REGIONS OF STUDY</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aust/NZ</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Asia/India</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia/Eurasia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Regions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants studied through different types of programs. Sixty-one percent of the total participants were enrolled in a study abroad program in which all the students were enrolled in the same university or national program and a professor from the Home
University led and taught the students for the entire semester or oversaw the program (i.e., hires the faculty, designs the curriculum, mentors the students, etc.). Thirty-nine percent were enrolled in programs that are identified as affiliates, which are programs led or organized by other universities or private organizations over which the Home University has no oversight or influence. Examples of these programs are IES Abroad, Middle Eastern Study Program, Dublin School of Business, Trinity Semester in Spain, Creation Care Program: Belize, AustraLearn, and Semester at Sea. The affiliate students may have studied and traveled with a group of students similar in mission to the Home University and mostly from the United States, or they may have studied and lived in a single location with students from around the world and in an institution distinctly different from their Home University. The range of objectives for the affiliate programs is as individual as the programs and the students’ choices about the course of study they pursue. In both types of programs, affiliate and Home University led, students may or may not have been supported or required to deliberately reflect on their cultural awareness, adjustment or worldview challenges while studying abroad.

Of note regarding the type of program in which participants studied, the control group shows a fairly even division between the Home University led and overseen program to that of the affiliates (Home University led/overseen=49.1 percent and affiliates=50.9 percent, respectively). The treatment group, however, shows a distinct difference: 74 percent of participants studied through Home University programs compared to 25.6 who studied through affiliate programs (Table 4.2).
Table 4.2. Type of study abroad program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM TYPES</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTROL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliates</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home University</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TREATMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliates</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home University</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The control group included 57 students with all participants studying in the same term. The control group participants’ ages ranged from 19 to 50 years old. Seventy-four percent were 20 and 21 years old and 1.9 percent were 24 or older. Eighty-one percent were female and 92.5 percent were Caucasian. For 64.2 percent of the control participants, their major required them to study abroad. The control group participants leading culture regions of study were Latin America (45.6 percent), Sub-Sahara Africa (21.1 percent) and Europe (17.5 percent) (Table 4.3).

The treatment group included 43 students and studied in two different terms. The original thesis design intended for the treatment group to have studied in a single term in spring 2009. The number of completed participants, however, did not offer sufficient numbers to conduct sound analysis. Therefore, more subjects were sought in fall 2009.

The treatment group participants’ ages ranged from 19 to 30 years old. Seventy-seven percent were 20 and 21 years old and 5.1 percent were 24 to 30 years old. Sixty-six percent were female and 87.2 percent were Caucasian. For 35.9 percent of the treatment
participants, their major required them to study abroad, which is a 28.3 percentage difference to the control group. The treatment group participants leading culture regions of study were Europe (67.4 percent) and Sub-Sahara Africa (11.6 percent), with Latin America (7.0 percent) and Islamic Regions (7.0) sharing third place (Table 4.3). Of note in the treatment group is the difference of who studied in Europe to the second region, being a 55.8 percentage difference. Also of note is the similarity of Europe’s culture to that of the participants’ home culture, though 58.9 percent of the treatment group did report the host culture’s religion as being distinctly different from their own (Table 4.4).

The reality and challenge of this study, and of research in the intercultural education field, is the confounding variables that influence sojourners’ experiences and learning. In order to observe the hypothesis, the researcher collected participant reports about their study abroad conditions—the confounding variables—through a closed-ended questionnaire. A plethora of literature in intercultural education shows several conditions that can influence how well sojourners adjust culturally and develop their intercultural sensitivity. Table 4.4 identifies this thesis’ participants’ reports regarding some of those conditions that can serve as confounding variables in a study abroad experience.

---

205 A sample of educators’ and sojourners’ handbooks is listed as references to show the range of topics covered that might prepare and support sojourners during and after their sojourn: Savicki, ed.; Landis, Bennett and Bennett, eds.; Fowler, ed.; Paige, ed.; Kohls; Paige et al.
Table 4.3. Study abroad culture regions, control and treatment group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM TYPES</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTROL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Sahara Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aust/NZ</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia/Eurasia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Asia/India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Regions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TREATMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Sahara Africa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Asia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Asia/India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aust/NZ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4. Participants’ culture preparation and study abroad conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURE PREPARATION AND STUDY ABROAD CONDITIONS</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid percent reported unless noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold indicates ≥10 percent difference between control and treatment groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Culture Study/Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary language in host country different than own</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied host country language before study abroad</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied host country language during study abroad</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied other religions prior to study abroad</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before study abroad, 0-5 hours of formal study about culture in general</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before study abroad, had one or more courses about culture in general</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before study abroad, had 0-5 hours of formal study about the culture in which you studied</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before study abroad, had one or more courses about the culture in which you studied</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the study abroad, had 0-5 hours of formal study about the culture in which you studied</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the study abroad, had one or more courses about the culture in which you studied</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One previous cross-cultural experience of 4 or more weeks</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two previous cross-cultural experience of 4 or more weeks</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived cross-culturally for 6+ months from 1-12 years old</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived cross-culturally for 6+ months from 13-18 years old</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Housing Arrangements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with host country family</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with host country family + 1-2 other study abroad residents</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with host country family + 3 or more other study abroad residents</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in campus residence with mostly host country residents</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in campus residence with mostly other western students (North Americans, Europeans, Australians)</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived with mostly other western students (North Americans, Europeans, Australians)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived mostly with host country people</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4. continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Interaction with Host Culture People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Averaged less than 1 hour of daily interaction with host family or residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaged 1 hour of daily interaction with host family or residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaged 2 hours of daily interaction with host family or residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaged more than 3 hours of daily interaction with host family or residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During study abroad had a host country mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During study abroad had a non-host country mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaged almost daily interaction with people of different religion than your own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Culture Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Religion of Host Country: Catholic or Orthodox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host country religion is distinctly different than my own: True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host country religion is distinctly different than my own: False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host country religion is distinctly different than my own: Don’t Know or Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

The method to support a postpositivist methodology is a quantitative design. To best explore the hypothesis, the researcher chose a quasi-experimental design, seeking pre- and post-test data from nonrandomized subjects in a control and a treatment group. Both groups completed two measurement tools.

The first tool used was a closed-ended rating scale called the Intercultural Development Inventory. In June 2007 the researcher completed a two-and-a-half-day qualifying seminar to secure the knowledge and permission to administer the tool and provide feedback to respondents. The tool’s co-author taught the seminar. The participants completed the tool prior to their study abroad departure and prior to their
departure from their host country. All participants also completed a second closed-ended questionnaire, querying participants about their study abroad conditions and experience in order to observe potential confounding variables. Depending on the situation, participants completed the measurement tools in a paper or an electronic format. As an incentive to complete both measurement tools in all groups, participants were told that if they completed both tools, their names would be entered in a drawing for four $25 gift certificates. This was carried out and the lucky participants were sent their prizes. Data from both tools were subject to statistical analysis to test the hypothesis.

In addition, the treatment group was asked to voluntarily complete a workbook that the researcher wrote and to use the reflective process taught in the workbook during the participants’ study abroad experience. This workbook was the intervention. No materials from this workbook or evidence of participants’ reflection were collected. During the treatment participants’ study term, the researcher corresponded electronically with them on four different occasions, encouraging them to refer to the workbook content and to use the Cultural Learning Cycle as a way to process their experience. Also, the treatment group was queried with three additional closed-ended rating questions about (1) whether or not they read the workbook and did the practice reflections (partially or completely), (2) the amount they reflected about spiritual and religious tensions during their study abroad experience, and (3) the amount they used the particular framework taught in the workbook to reflect on their experience.

Instrument Description and Data Collection Method

Measurement Tool One: Intercultural Development Inventory
The first tool used was the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a 50-item questionnaire using a five-point Likert Scale (disagree to agree). The tool’s theoretical foundation supports a constructivist methodology. Participants completed the IDI prior to their departure and in the last week of their study abroad before leaving the host country. Completing both the pre- and post-test was the criterion to be considered a study participant. To collect the post-experience data the researcher requested that participants complete the IDI before they completed the Religious and Spiritual Experience questionnaire. A high majority complied.

The IDI’s construction is based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). From this theory, Bennett and Mitchell Hammer developed the IDI to provide a tool to measure and inform one’s cognitive, behavioral and affective intercultural sensitivity and competence development. Completion of the tool offers a report about which of the six worldview orientations or domains the respondent most often experiences worldview differences. Three of the domains describe an ethnocentric worldview and the second three describe a multicultural worldview. The first three domains are: Denial, Defense and Minimization. The next three domains are: Acceptance, Adaptation and Encapsulated Marginality.

The IDI is an objective latent variable tool with alpha scores for each of the six domains ranging from 0.80 to 0.85. The psychometric analysis of the IDI demonstrates an acceptable construct and content validity and reliability. Analysis also shows support for lack of bias in item constructions along gender, age and education and support for lack of social desirability. Finally, analysis demonstrates highly reliable scales.²⁰⁶

For the purpose of group assessment, this tool provides two types of feedback. The first type is numerical and the second is narrative feedback. The numerical feedback is expressed as scores and is used primarily for research and assessment purposes such as in this thesis study. There are two numerical scores. The narrative feedback describes the two scores with vocabulary and explanations that describe the DMIS domains and theory regarding intercultural sensitivity development.

The IDI numerical feedback offers two scores. The first is the Overall Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity Profile, often referred to as the “developmental score” (DS). It is on a scale of one to 145. The developmental score reports a placement on Bennett’s developmental continuum and is referred to in this study as the “developmental scale score.” The second IDI feedback is a Worldview Profile Scale score with some domains having subscales within the domain. This study does not analyze or discuss the subscales. The score is determined through an analysis of a cluster of questions related to the various profiles or domains (i.e., denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration). The Worldview Profile Scale score describes an individual’s or group’s condition within the developmental domain. The three conditions in the developing domain are “unresolved,” “in transition” and “resolved.” For studies such as this, the position on the subscale is expressed numerically using a one to five scale with one being at the beginning of the unresolved position.

Table 4.5 offers sample questions from each of the six domains and their subscales.
Table 4.5. IDI sample questions for worldview domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDI DOMAIN</th>
<th>SUBSCALES IN DOMAIN</th>
<th>SAMPLE QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>There would be fewer problems in the world if culturally different groups kept to themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>It is best to form relationships with people of your own culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td></td>
<td>People in our culture work harder than people in most other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reversal</td>
<td>People from our culture are lazier than people from other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>Cultural differences are less important than the fact that people have the same needs, interests, and goals in life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>Because there are universal values, cross-cultural conflicts can be resolved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>I can look at the world through the eyes of a person from another culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>When I am with people from different cultures, I act differently than when I am with people from my own culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encapsulated Marginality</td>
<td></td>
<td>I feel rootless because I do not think I have a cultural identification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 is a sample IDI report, not including numerical scores, from which an administrator interprets and offers feedback to an individual or group respondent.
Table 4.6. IDI feedback example

IDI PROFILE for "9385"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY</th>
<th>Ethnocentrism</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Ethnorelativism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Model of</td>
<td>DIMENSIONS</td>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Minimization</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>INTERCULTURAL</td>
<td>Reversal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Development</td>
<td>SCALES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marginality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marginality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your Overall Perceived Intercultural Sensitivity

PROFILE (PS) >

Your Overall Development of Intercultural Sensitivity

PROFILE (DS) >

WORLDVIEW PROFILE

- **DD SCALE**: Indicates a worldview that simplifies and/or polarizes cultural difference.
- **R SCALE**: Indicates a worldview that reverses "us" and "them" polarization, where "them" is superior.
- **M SCALE**: Indicates a worldview that highlights cultural commonality and universal issues.
- **AA SCALE**: Indicates a worldview that can comprehend and accommodate to complex cultural differences.
- **EM SCALE**: Indicates a worldview that incorporates a multicultural identity with confused cultural perspectives.

Narrative developmental feedback would describe the sample results in the following way if it were a group report:

This report shows that the respondents are in transition in the Defense Against Differences domain and moving toward Minimization of Differences. The report
suggests that respondents view the world and worldview differences from a primarily monocultural perspective. The Worldview Profile position of being “in transition” in the Defense domain suggests that when respondents confront differences, they often understand and make sense of differences with polarized explanations of “us and them.” They defend their own worldview and culture as better, more advanced or true, unable to recognize or understand differences and the virtues and vices of differing worldviews. The report shows that there are no trailing issues in Reversal as this is “resolved,” meaning that the respondents do not tend to polarize “us and them” to reverse the defense that “them” is the better worldview. The suggested intercultural competencies to develop are (1) increased curiosity about culture awareness about own culture and other’s culture; (2) observation skills about culture differences; (3) willingness to explore other cultures; (4) anxiety and stress management when experiencing differences; (5) empathy development; (6) patience; (7) nonjudgmental responses to differences, respecting others’ values and beliefs.

Measurement Tool Two: Religious and Spiritual Experience During a Cross-Cultural Study Abroad Questionnaire

This second measurement tool was a questionnaire that collected a range of information from the participants, asking them to rate their answers using scales the researcher created or 6-point Likert scales appropriate to the question. The researcher created the questionnaire, choosing areas of query based on knowledge gained from a literature review, her experience and curiosity to explore particular areas of processing spiritual and religious tension. All questions but one were closed-ended questions. (Appendix)

The data collected were categorized and analyzed in three ways. The first data category collected was participant demographic. A second category of questions queried participants about their study abroad conditions, sometimes referred to as “interventions.”

The third category of questions collected and analyzed queried participants about (1) the tension they experienced during the study abroad experience and (2) how they
processed the tension. This third category was analyzed to explore the relationship for
two particular measures of interest: tension and processing.

The final question was open-ended, asking participants to describe a critical
incident related to their spirituality and/or religion and how they processed and responded
to the experience. The intention was that this narrative data might be used to further
investigate the hypothesis. However, the researcher decided to limit the scope of the
study with hopes of conducting future data analysis.

The control group questionnaire included 76 closed-ended questions. The
researcher added five questions (questions 77-81) to the treatment group’s questionnaire.
Questions 77 to 79 asked about the degree of use of the intervention and degree of
processing through reflection that they did about cultural differences, especially
differences related to beliefs, spirituality and religion. These additional treatment group
questions were used to analyze the relationship between intervention dosage and the IDI
developmental change score difference. Category descriptions for the questions are as
follow:

1. Participant Demographics: gender, race/ethnicity, age, sex, intended major and
   whether or not it required a study abroad, primary country of study, previous
   experience in a cross-cultural setting

2. Study Abroad Conditions: housing arrangement, amount of interaction with host
country people, host or non-host country mentor, primary religion of host country
   and how distinctly different it was from participant’s, language different from
   participant’s primary language
3. Preparation and Formal Learning: host country language study before and during study abroad, general-culture knowledge study prior to study abroad, specific-culture knowledge study prior to and during study abroad, study of other religions prior to study abroad

4. Interaction and Comfort Level With Host Country People: amount of interaction with host country people about religion and spirituality, development of comfort level in spiritual and religious oriented interaction, purpose for interactions about spiritual and religious topics, comfort level regarding participant’s own differentness in the host country

5. Cultural Awareness: increased identification and understanding of culture’s influence on religion and spirituality

6. Tension/Stress/Discomfort Experienced Related to Cultural, Spiritual and Religious Differences

7. Processing of Tension: how they processed the tension i.e., journaling, talking, praying, reading, and so forth.

8. Perceived Overall Change in Perception, Attitude, Understanding and Behavior About Spirituality and Religion

9. Perceived Overall Perception and Attitude Change About Cultural Differences
Measures of Interest

Variables of interest included tension/stress experienced and level of processing. Tension/stress experienced was composed of eight items that were recoded to range from zero to six. A response of “don’t know” was coded between “slightly false” and “slightly true.” In order to receive a score, the participant was required to have at least 75 percent of the items (n=6). A higher score indicated a higher level of tension/stress experienced. Level of processing was a combination of five items that were recoded to range from zero to six. A response of “don’t know” was scored between “slightly false” and “slightly true.” The participant was required to have at least 75 percent of the items (n=4) to receive a score. A higher score indicated a higher level of processing. These were multi-item scales, therefore Cronbach’s alpha established the internal consistency of each scale (Table 4.7), and factor analysis confirmed unidimensionality. For level of reflective processing, the reliability coefficient was lower than desired. It was composed, however, of only five items and while there were many response options, not all of them were chosen. Given these delimitations, the alpha was acceptable.\(^{207}\) Also for level of reflective processing, two factors resulted that indicate two components to this measure: reflection and social support. They are highly correlated, are both part of processing and so were left together as a single measure.

---

Table 4.7. Measures of interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES OF INTEREST</th>
<th>ITEMS INCLUDED</th>
<th># of Items (reliability coefficient)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tension/Stress Experienced</td>
<td>I felt the stress of being culturally isolated from others from my own culture during a majority portion of my study abroad experience; I felt the stress of being culturally immersed in a host culture during a majority portion of my study abroad experience; I felt the stress of not feeling the respect that I deserved or of not receiving undeserved recognition from those in my host country; I felt the stress of feeling invisible to members of the host culture because its people did not or could not accept important aspects of my identity; I experienced stress because I had little access to those from my own culture group; I experienced stress because generally speaking I did not have power nor control in the intercultural experiences; I felt stressed by the ethnocentric behavior that the host culture exhibited; I felt stressed by the degree of cultural difference of the host culture to that of my own culture.</td>
<td>8 ($\alpha = 0.87$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Reflective Processing</td>
<td>When I experienced tension about religious matters I worked through my experience; During my cross-cultural experience I journaled about my religious and or spiritual experience; During my cross cultural experience I talked to God about my religious and or spiritual experience; During my cross cultural experience I talked with a person from my culture about the different religious practices or beliefs to seek an understanding of the differences; To process my spiritual and religious experiences I read from the Bible to seek instruction and comfort.</td>
<td>5 ($\alpha = 0.68$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

The data collected was subjected to three standard descriptive statistics to explore and test the hypothesis ($H_1$). The researcher hired a statistician (1) to determine the appropriate tests to test the hypothesis ($H_1$) and (2) to ensure standards of analysis, reporting and ethics acceptable in the field. The first descriptive statistic used was a matched pairs t-test to test for probability of significance of average change scores between the control and treatment groups. A second descriptive statistic was a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the dosage groups and measures of interest on their developmental change scores. This was conducted for between and within treatments of variance. The third descriptive statistic was the Pearson Correlation to measure and describe the relationship between the tension and processing variables, which are presented as $H_2$ and $H_3$. These results were then tested for probability of significance using a t-test statistic.$^{208}$

Intervention Description

Given the limited contact that the researcher could have with all the potential treatment group participants, she determined that the best approach for an intervention tool or event was a written explanation of the intercultural concepts, theories and framework for processing. The result is a self-published workbook. The title of the workbook is “The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner: Seeking the Sacred and Peace with Others.” The researcher refers to it as a workbook because the chapters’ design provides

---

a pattern of explanation and then questions about which the reader is asked to reflect. The reflection sections are titled “Sojourner’s Reflection.”

While the primary methodology of this study is postpositivist, the intervention follows an epistemological belief that people develop their worldviews through a social constructionist approach in which they also participate in its development. Therefore, the intervention encourages its readers to reflect on the role of culture and social membership in their own and other’s worldview development. In addition, it supports the readers to seek new knowledge through a pattern of experience with people of other cultures and worldviews, and to reflect on and contemplate the meaning of the experience from multiple socially constructed perspectives.

All potential treatment participants were given the workbook, free of charge, before their departure for their study abroad. Most students wanted a hard copy of the workbook and some preferred an electronic version. The participants received the workbook at varying lengths of time before their departure due to a lack of access to the departure dates of each student. The researcher also sought permission to require all study abroad students to use the workbook and practice the processing framework. Permission was not granted.

The researcher chose the workbook’s topics based on materials she had used in training, her own cross-cultural experiences, a review of other preparatory books and workbooks, and from literature regarding spirituality and worldview development. The researcher entitled the workbook The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner: Seeking the Sacred and Peace With Others.

---

PREFACE: Study Abroad, Spirituality and Worldview
- Pattern of Reflective Thinking: Drake’s Cultural Learning Cycle
- Religious Differences in Your Host Culture
- A “Good” Participant
- When Your Experience is About Over
- Your Spirituality, Religion and Worldview

ONE: Confessions of a Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Developing the Habit of Cultural Reflection
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Starting Where We Are
  - Spiritual and Spirituality
  - Religion and Religious

TWO: Spiritual and Worldview Expectations and Goals
- Holistic Goal Setting: Sacred and Secular Learning
- Goal Setting That Integrates the Secular and the Sacred
- A Suggested Goal: The Importance of a Host Culture Mentor
- Adjusting Goals and Expectations
- Preparing to Return Home Before You Leave
- Tangible Value From Seeking the Sacred: Employment Reality
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Stating Your Goals and Expectations

THREE: The Savvy Sojourner
- Making Choices: The Cultural Adjustment Map
- Cultural Adjustment Map
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Savvy Cultural Adjustments

FOUR: Seeking the Sacred Around the World
- Defining the Abstract
  - Sacred
  - Belief and Belief Systems
- Cross-Cultural Challenges to Seeking the Sacred: Alterity
- A Transformative Cross-Cultural Conversation
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Anticipating the Risks of Alterity

FIVE: Worldview and the Dimension of Culture
- Wicked Questions We Ask
- Sojourn’s Reflection: Asking and Answering Wicked Questions
  - Functions of a Worldview
  - Worldview World Sampler
  - Dimensions of Culture
- Sojourn’s Reflection: Experiences That Develop Your Worldview
- Sojourner’s Reflection: Values That Develop Your Worldview
Conclusion

This thesis’s postpositivist methodology and the method to support it has the potential to advance the knowledge of the relationship between the processing of the spiritual and religious tensions experienced during the cross-cultural sojourn and the
sojourner’s intercultural competence development. The method used was to create nonrandomized control and treatment groups and to collect data from them about their study abroad experience. Two measurement tools were used to collect data from the control and treatment group. The first tool measured the worldview development and was gathered prior to the participants’ study abroad experience and in the last week of the experience. The second tool was used to gather data about demographics, study abroad conditions and variables of interest. The treatment group was offered an intervention in the form of a workbook that the researcher wrote: “The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner: Seeking the Sacred and Peace With Others.” This intervention reflected a social constructivist philosophy of learning. This workbook included (1) knowledge about cultural adjustment, (2) intercultural sensitivity development and worldview development especially related to spirituality and religion, and (3) a framework to process critical incidents and to increase awareness of self and other’s culture. The intervention was a pedagogy meant to support the treatment participants’ knowledge and critical incident experience. The knowledge gained through the collected data and descriptive statistics offers intercultural educators content and pedagogical possibilities to more fully and holistically support sojourners in their intercultural sensitivity development.
CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The intent of this study is to advance the field of intercultural education’s understanding of how to support cross-cultural sojourners in their journey toward increased competence as world citizens. To learn more about how to support sojourners through the critical incident, the research question asked if a relationship existed between processing the spiritual and religious tensions that undergraduate students experience during a semester study abroad and that of the same students’ worldview development, as that would be an indication of developing intercultural competence. Using descriptive analysis, the alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) proved not to be true. An IDI narrative report shows no worldview domain profile change for the total participants, control group or treatment group. In addition, intervention dosage and average worldview development scores were subjected to one-way analysis of variance. Though the numbers are small, the finding show a significant change score difference for those participants who both read the intervention and reflected about cultural differences, especially about spiritual and religious differences. Finally, data from two measures of interest reported in the second measurement tool, regarding tension experienced and levels of processing, were subjected to correlation descriptive statistics to that of the average developmental change.
scores for the respective groups. Though the correlation was positive, no significance surfaced.

**Data Analysis**

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) software statistically calculates several scores for interpretation. The average developmental score is what this researcher determined as the most useful score to test the hypothesis, as it is the overall measurement of the current status of one’s intercultural sensitivity. The developmental score indicates the participant’s general worldview orientation corresponding to Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS).

As seen in table 5.1, the average scores from the pre-test to the post-test increase for the total sample, 88.45 to 91.98. This is also true for the control and treatment groups, respectively (control=89.25 to 94.06; treatment=87.38 to 89.17). The average difference scores were positive for all three groups as well, with the largest change in the control group.

**Hypothesis**

The research question is as follows: Is there a relationship between how cross-cultural sojourners process their spiritual and religious tensions and that of their change in worldview orientation based on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity? In other words, will the IDI average developmental change score be different between the treatment group and the control group?

The alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) put forth the hypothesis that the average IDI developmental change score would be significantly different between the treatment and
control groups. A statistically significant t-score would indicate that there is a 95 percent probability that the developmental change score did not happen by chance. In other words, something influenced the change. Therefore, a two sample independent t-test was applied. A standard p=.05 was used for all statistical analysis.

Upon statistical analysis, this hypothesis ($H_1$) did not prove to be true. The average post-developmental scores for both groups were higher than the measurements taken prior to the participants’ departure for the study abroad countries (Table 5.2). This indicates a positive change in their worldview development. The treatment group’s average developmental change score, however, was not significantly different than that of the control group, $t(96)=1.547$, $p=.125$. In fact, the control group’s average developmental score was higher than the treatment group’s developmental score, 5.06 and 1.79 respectively.

A second round of tests was done to examine change within the treatment and control groups separately (Table 5.3). Matched pairs t-tests comparing the pre-test and post-test scores showed that the control group average developmental score did change significantly, $t(55)=3.719$, $p=.001$. Within the treatment group, however, the average developmental score did not change significantly, $t(41)=1.093$, $p=.281$. 
Table 5.1. IDI developmental scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample (n=100)</th>
<th>Control Group (n=57)</th>
<th>Treatment Group (n=43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>Diff. Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>88.45</td>
<td>91.98</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.15</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>10.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>48.79</td>
<td>61.13</td>
<td>55.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Comparison of IDI developmental difference scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment (n=42)</th>
<th>Control (n=56)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.547</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. Comparison of IDI developmental pre-test and post-test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment (n=42)</th>
<th>Control (n=56)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>87.38</td>
<td>89.17</td>
<td>89.25</td>
<td>94.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>10.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A third approach to investigate treatment effect was to consider whether a specific dose of the intervention made a difference in the developmental change scores. Participants were not required to read the intervention nor were they required to follow the request to reflect on their sojourn experience. Anticipating a range of intervention participation, the researcher asked treatment participants three questions in the post-test. These questions determined participants’ (1) use of the workbook and (2) if they reflected on their experience, especially on those experiences where cultural differences and spiritual and religious tension occurred. Table 5.4 describes the three intervention dosage components.

Table 5.4. Intervention dosage components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVENTION DOSAGE COMPONENTS</th>
<th>Question: Two Option, Closed-ended Rating Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># 1 Read Only</td>
<td>“I read and/or worked through Naomi’s workbook, The Spiritual Cross-cultural Sojourner.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Reflected Only</td>
<td>“I reflected through journaling or/and conversations about cultural differences, often reflecting on differences related to beliefs, spirituality and religion” and/or “When I reflected on cultural differences, I used the models offered in Naomi’s workbook of the Emic-Etic Interchange and the Cultural Learning Cycle, learning about perspectives of my culture and the host culture.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Read and Reflected</td>
<td>Answered “yes” to components #1 and #2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To examine the impact of the intervention dosage components, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare the dosage groups on their developmental change scores. Two of the treatment group participants were dropped from this analysis because, while they received the intervention, they reported that they did not read and/or work through the workbook, nor reflected through journaling and/or conversations about cultural differences. The treatment group data for this next round of analysis included only participants who applied the intervention with varying degree.

The results of the ANOVA showed that there was a significant relationship between the level or dosage of treatment experienced and the change in developmental score, F(3,87)=2.731, p=.049. Follow-up tests using the LSD method were run to determine which of the groups differed significantly. There were two group comparisons that were significantly different. The control group (n=56) had a significantly higher average developmental change score than the group that only did one component of the treatment (n=10), p = 0.011 (Table 5.5). The difference between the control group and the group that did two of the treatment components (n=18) was approaching statistical significance, p=.080. The control group had a higher average developmental change score than the two-component group. Lastly, the group that did all three components of the treatment (n=7) had a significantly higher average developmental change score than the group that only did one component of the treatment (n=10), p=.017. Of note, those treatment participants who only read and/or worked through the workbook and did not reflect on their experience with cultural differences (n=10) showed a negative average developmental score.
Table 5.5. Average developmental change scores, by dosage group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control Group (N=56)</th>
<th>Read Only 1 Component (N=10)</th>
<th>Reflect Only 2 Components (N=18)</th>
<th>Read and Reflect 3 Components (N=7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>-4.08</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>8.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>14.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity Score and Worldview Profile**

The IDI data offer additional knowledge about the participants’ worldview development. The more common way to report the IDI results is to give narrative feedback to individuals and groups, rather than a numerical report such as this thesis utilized. This narrative report synthesizes the overall developmental intercultural sensitivity profile with the worldview profile domain scale condition. The narrative IDI feedback reports described the total participants (N=98) pre-experience average overall developmental intercultural sensitivity score (mean=88.45) in the following way:

**Prior to Study Abroad IDI Narrative Report**

The group IDI report suggests that the participants were generally responding to and making sense of cultural differences at the beginning cusp of a Minimization worldview orientation. Forty-one percent of the participants were unresolved, 56 percent in transition and three percent resolved. A trailing issue for the participants before they studied abroad was that they tended to polarize differences with an “us and them” perspective, with other cultures being better than their own culture. The DMIS theory and the IDI narrative interpretation describes this as having trailing issues in Reversal, meaning that while they are not likely to be defensive about their own culture, the respondents tend to reverse the cultural defense from their own culture to another, unable to recognize and evaluate assets and vices in both cultures.
In summary, this pre-study abroad narrative report indicates that the majority of the participants in both the control and treatment group tested and filtered life’s experiences and behaved accordingly from a monocultural or ethnocentric perspective. Generally, they embraced cultural differences and understood that culture makes a difference in feelings, behaviors, and thinking, but the group had a simple and surface understanding of the deeper epistemological implications of cultural differences.

At the end of 14 to 17 weeks of studying and living immersed in a culture distinctly different from their own, all participants again completed the IDI. The narrative IDI feedback reports that for the total post-experience participants (N=99), the average overall developmental intercultural sensitivity result (mean=91.98) described them in the following way:

*After the Study Abroad IDI Narrative Report*

The post-test data showed that the participants remained in the same DMIS profile of Minimization with trailing issues in Reversal.

Though the total participants’ average pre- to post-developmental score did increase, the overall developmental intercultural sensitivity profile did not change. The control group (N=56) did show significant average developmental score change from the pre- to the post-measurement (Table 5.3), but this did not change their overall developmental intercultural sensitivity profile narrative. The treatment group (N=42) average pre- and post-developmental score difference showed no significant change (Table 5.3) and also remained in the same overall developmental intercultural sensitivity profile description of Minimization with trailing issues in Reversal.
Normative Comparison

A group normative comparison for the post developmental scores would be helpful to compare the findings to a larger population. Unfortunately, only an individual normative comparison table is available. The IDI individual normative scale is based on N=822 and a standard deviation equal to 15 points.\textsuperscript{210} Using an individual participant’s post-developmental score that is closest to the total participants’ average score (mean=91.98), this individual’s post-developmental score (92.07) resides near the 35th percentile. This means that 65 percent of the population generally measures at higher developmental scores than does this individual’s score. A control group participant whose post-experience developmental score (94.18) is closest to its group’s average score (mean=94.06) is in the 40th percentile with 60 percent of the general population measuring higher developmental scores. A treatment group participant whose post-experience developmental score (89.90) is closest to its group’s average score (mean=89.17) is near the 30th percentile with 70 percent of the general population measuring higher developmental scores.

Hypothesis Summary

To summarize the findings from the IDI developmental pre- and post-comparative scores and the profile narratives, there was no significant change in worldview development for these participants. Overall, their change scores were positive but with no statistically significant growth and little movement in the DMIS profile domain of

\textsuperscript{210} Mitchell R. Hammer. “The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Qualifying Seminar.” Powerpoint handout. 2007: 26, slide 19; Debra Freathy, IDI Program Coordinator. Email correspondence, 10 February 2010.
Minimization with trailing issues in Reversal. Intervention dosage analysis, however, suggests that those who completed two components of the intervention did have the greatest positive change, even though it was not quite statistically significant. Yet, the findings also indicate that those treatment participants who only read and/or worked through the intervention showed a negative relationship to their worldview development related to intercultural competence. All other degrees of intervention dose show a positive relationship with the change of the developmental score.

Table 5.6. Pre-test IDI developmental score and worldview profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE/IDI MEASUREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Development Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIS Profile Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusp of Minimization (range = 85-115) with trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusp of Minimization (range = 85-115) with trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusp of Minimization (range = 85-115) with trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIS Profile Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.59 Reversal Condition: In Transition/2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.62 Reversal Condition: In Transition/2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.54 Reversal Condition: In Transition/3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.7. Post-test IDI developmental score and worldview profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST-STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE/IDI MEASUREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Development Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIS Profile Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization (range = 85-115) with some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization (range = 85-115) with some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusp of Minimization (range = 85-115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with trailing issues in Reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIS Profile Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal Condition: Moving toward resolved/3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal Condition: Moving toward resolved/3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimization Condition: In Transition/2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal Condition: Nearly resolved/3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8. IDI overall developmental score of intercultural sensitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial/Defense or Reversal</th>
<th>Minimization</th>
<th>Acceptance/Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants</td>
<td>88.45</td>
<td>115.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>89.25</td>
<td>130.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group</td>
<td>87.38</td>
<td>145.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

159
Table 5.9. IDI domain subscale, total participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial/Defense</th>
<th>Reversal</th>
<th>Minimization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unresolved</td>
<td>In Transition</td>
<td>Resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures of Interest

The reviewed literature regarding the phenomenon under study supports the understanding that the sojourner will experience stress related to cultural differences as a result of the cross-cultural experience. Other ways to describe this stress is discomfort, culture shock and tension. This experience of stress is referred to as a “critical incident.” The tension is considered the catalyst to challenge the sojourner’s choice about whether or not to process the affective, behavioral and cultural dimensions of the experience with cultural differences.

Researchers are exploring a conjecture that is imbedded in this study. The conjecture is that how sojourners process the critical incident has a relationship to their worldview development. Supported by reviewed literature, this study asserts that when sojourners process the critical incident with a reflective approach that contemplates the meaning of the cultural differences and has social support during processing, sojourners will develop toward a multicultural worldview.

Given that this study’s hypothesis is exploring the tension experienced in the critical incident phenomenon and how it is processed to develop intercultural
competence, it seemed important to test these two variables regarding tension and level of reflective processing. Therefore, two more questions follow the primary alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) discussed. The first question is related to the tension that sojourners experienced, especially tension related to spirituality and religion. The second question explores the level of reflective processing of the tension.

**Tension**

The question of the first measure of interest is stated in the following way: Is there a relationship between stress, especially related to spirituality and religion, and that of the participants’ change in worldview orientation based on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity? In other words, will the IDI average developmental change score show a relationship to the participants’ self-report regarding tension experienced during their sojourn?

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ($H_2$) states that there will be a positive relationship between the IDI developmental change score and the tension that participants experienced during the cross-cultural experience especially related to spirituality and religion. In order to test this hypothesis, a series of Pearson correlations was run. Upon statistical analysis, the alternative hypothesis ($H_2$) did not prove to be true. While there is a positive relationship between tension related to cultural differences experienced and developmental change score, it was not statistically significant, $r=.100$, $p=.418$ ($N=69$, standard deviation=1.32, mean=1.87).
**Processing the Tension**

The question of the second measure of interest is stated in the following way: Is there a relationship between the participants’ level of reflective processing of cultural differences, especially related to spirituality and religion, and that of the participants’ change in worldview orientation based on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity? In other words, will the IDI average developmental change score show a relationship to the participants’ self-report regarding their level of reflective processing of their cultural stress experienced during their sojourn?

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ($H_3$) states that there will be a positive relationship between the IDI developmental change score and the level of reflective processing that participants did during the cross-cultural experience, especially related to spirituality and religion. In order to test this hypothesis, a series of Pearson correlations was run. Upon statistical analysis, the alternative hypothesis ($H_3$) did not prove to be true. While there is a positive relationship between the level of reflective processing the participants completed related to cultural differences and that of the developmental change score, the correlation is close to zero and was not statistically significant, $r=0.038$, $p=0.719$ (N=92, standard deviation=1.07, mean=4.68).

**Conclusion**

Data analysis findings show that the alternative hypothesis put forth ($H_1$) was not true. Though descriptive statistics indicate positive worldview development within the control and treatment groups, there was not a significant average change score between the groups. An IDI narrative report supports this finding. Data analysis of the intervention
dosage and average worldview development scores show, however, a significant change score difference for those participants who both read the intervention and reflected about cultural differences, especially those spiritual and religious differences. Though the correlation was positive, no significance surfaced regarding tension experienced and levels of processing to that of the average developmental change scores for the respective groups. A discussion of the findings and their implications can offer insights and suggestions for further research to continue to explore the relationship of a pedagogy for processing the spiritual and religious worldview tension that cross-cultural sojourners experience.
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

Introduction

This study investigated worldview development and its relationship to processing spiritual and religious tension that cross-cultural sojourners experience. More specifically, it studied how a particular teaching method might support sojourners to progress toward the development of a multicultural worldview orientation related to intercultural competence. In several ways, this study serves as a pilot study to advance the field’s knowledge. An analysis of the data demonstrated that while both the control and treatment groups’ worldview did develop toward a multicultural or ethnorelative orientation, the change was not significant for the treatment group. In fact, the control group showed a higher average change score and the change was statistically significant. Though the research alternative hypothesis ($H_1$) did not prove true, further data analysis regarding the intervention dose does support the investment of further research related to pedagogy and its influence on multicultural worldview development. The findings offer knowledge about what variables might be explored to support cross-cultural sojourners’ processing of critical incidents, especially due to spiritual and religious tension.
Discussion and Evaluation

Hypothesis

This study’s finding that the participants did have increased growth in their worldview development is consistent with the reviewed literature. Therefore, the study further supports the field’s asserted knowledge that cross-cultural sojourns supports worldview development, grounded on Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The sojourners’ change score shows growth, though both groups remained in the same worldview domain of Minimization with trailing issues in Reversal. The relationship between the three intervention dosage components and the IDI developmental score supports the need, however, for further research and offers direction for what intervention conditions might be explored.

An underlying question that this study investigated concerned a particular pedagogy and its content as a means to support the development of intercultural competence. While the alternative hypothesis was not proven true, the study does offer knowledge about pedagogy and content, and can serve as a catalyst for pedagogical design and research. The intervention in this study, which is a particular pedagogy and contains particular content, was a workbook: “The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner: Seeking the Sacred and Peace With Others.” The workbook introduced the DMIS and a processing framework to support reflection on critical incidents so as to develop the habit and skill of defining and strengthening emic and etic cultural awareness, knowledge and perspectives. The treatment participants self-reported whether they used the intervention,
grouping the treatment participants into three intervention dosage components (Table 6.1). The control group continued to serve with the same function in this analysis.

Table 6.1. Intervention dose components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVENTION DOSAGE COMPONENTS</th>
<th>Question: Two Option, Closed-ended Rating Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># 1 Read Only</td>
<td>“I read and/or worked through Naomi’s workbook, The Spiritual Cross-cultural Sojourner.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Reflected Only</td>
<td>“I reflected through journaling or/and conversations about cultural differences, often reflecting on differences related to beliefs, spirituality and religion” and/or “When I reflected on cultural differences, I used the models offered in Naomi’s workbook of the Emic-Etic Interchange and the Cultural Learning Cycle, learning about perspectives of my culture and the host culture.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Read and Reflected</td>
<td>Answered “yes” to components #1 and #2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voluntary or Required Reflective Processing

The first point of discussion related to intervention dosage is to consider how many participants voluntarily used the intervention. More specifically, the issue concerns the low numbers of participants who chose to use the intervention. The intervention was offered to all students at the same university who were studying abroad, totaling approximately 500 students. The intervention was offered to all participants at no charge. The Associate Dean of International Studies and the directors of the University programs
encouraged the study abroad students to participate but did not require them to do so. Whether they participated in the study, chose to read the workbook, or reflected on the experience had no official relationship to their specific coursework.

All potential treatment participants were also explicitly told that this study was about the spiritual and religious experience during their study abroad. In addition, the participants of this study came from a university whose explicit mission is to nurture its students toward maturity as culturally relevant people in leadership, scholarship and service. As a requirement to enroll in the University, all of the participants claim a Christian conviction and are regularly required to learn and reflect on spiritual and religious knowledge, values, lifestyle and experiences. The institution also concedes to and welcomes a range of convictions regarding this expectation. In other words, this population is inclined to be interested in spiritual and religious matters. The students are required to complete courses that explore these topics from multidisciplinary perspectives in the liberal arts curriculum and in their areas of specialization.

Given the context of the project setting and participant description, approximately 21 percent of nearly 300 study abroad students consented to participate in the treatment population. Approximately 65 percent of those who consented to participate completed both measurement tools, which is what qualified them as treatment participants. This is a respectable study completion rate. Further analysis of the data collection showed, however, that of the 40 treatment group participants’ whose data was used in the intervention dosage analysis, ten participants only read the intervention and 18 only reflected on cultural differences. Seven out of 40 participants both read and reflected on cultural differences.
A review of literature supported this result of such a low number of students who voluntarily chose to learn about the challenge of alterity and to practice a way to process and learn from the challenge. People are not naturally inclined to explore the challenges inherent in epistemological differences due to culture. This is why educators and trainers are searching for ways to support sojourners in this challenge. Yet, the reviewed literature also supports that a pedagogy that requires sojourners to process the critical incident increases and accelerates intercultural sensitivity. This study’s finding that only seven out of 40 participants took advantage of the opportunity suggests that the intercultural educator could learn more about the voluntary dynamic to process sojourners’ critical incidents.

To support a stronger design for this research project, the ideal would have been to require the participants to read the intervention and to practice the reflective framework. The researcher could not persuade the program directors to make the intervention a requirement, with good reasons. The decision requires careful ethical consideration. It requires teachers to examine students’ right to privacy, especially those related to spirituality and religion. Probably of greater concern in this research setting was the ability and availability to give the students the emotional, spiritual and cognitive support for processing topics that can create a significant measure of psychological and spiritual turbulence. This is why the tension is referred to as a “critical incident” and a “crucible experience.” Therefore, this study’s findings support further investigation into the dimension of requiring cross-cultural sojourners to learn about ways to process critical incidents and to hold sojourners accountable to apply what they learn about processing the tension.
A limitation of this study should also be noted. The participants in the study, as stated earlier, attended a university that emphasizes spiritual formation, requiring students to complete courses related to religion and regularly asking them to consider how faith and learning are integrated. Given that spirituality and religion is a focus of this study, this participant variable could have influenced the results as compared to participants from a randomized sample.

Why people are not inclined to face this intercultural challenge is another area for further research. Is it due to fear? Is it a lack of curiosity or empathy? Is it apathy? Is it a lack of knowing how to explore the challenge in a way that both supports and confronts the tension toward a productive outcome? Though the participants demonstrate a curiosity to experience what it is like to live and study in a different culture through their choice to study abroad and to participate in this study, the low number who took the additional step to explore deeper worldview challenges would prompt further exploration about this propensity to avoid such exploration.

**Intervention Types**

A second set of issues and questions this research prompts concern exploration about the types of pedagogy that supports sojourners’ critical incidents. In this study’s intervention, the participants were asked to do two things. First, they were asked to learn about (a) cultural adjustment, worldview function and development and the role of spirituality and religion in one’s worldview, and (b) a framework by which to process critical incidents to support development of intercultural competence. This was accomplished through reading and encouragement to reflect in the workbook prior to departure. Second, they were asked to apply the processing framework during the study
abroad experience. This was accomplished through written reflections or conversations with others. The literature reviewed supports the positive effect of this intervention’s pedagogy and content.

Though the sample numbers were small, this study’s findings regarding intervention dose are curious. The intervention dosage component analysis suggests that the group of treatment participants who both read the intervention and reflected on their experiences of cultural differences had the greatest worldview change score within the dosage group and between the control group (Table 5.5). The finding was also statistically significant compared to the group that did not read and who only reflected. The analysis also showed that those treatment participants who only reflected on cultural differences also had a positive worldview change score. Finally, the two-component group’s result is approaching significance to the control group’s average change score. This finding is noteworthy. It encourages the researcher to wonder if the hypothesis (H₁) would be proved true if there were greater limitations put on the research design, notably to require participants to apply both intervention components, and to require participation so as to achieve a higher number of participants overall.

To continue with the intervention dosage discussion, a curious finding is that those treatment participants who only read and/or worked through the workbook and did not reflect during the study abroad on their experience with cultural differences showed a negative average developmental score. In other words, participants who only read the workbook but did not reflect actually went backwards in Bennett’s DMIS worldview developmental change score. One can only speculate why this occurred.
These findings again support further investigation about whether or not to require cross-cultural sojourners to learn about and reflect on their experiences with alterity, as discussed previously. The findings also prompt questions about types of effective intervention. For example, what is the relationship of both reading and reflecting about the dimensions of the cross-cultural experience to intercultural sensitivity development? Reading is a more objective and cognitive learning experience compared to the subjective learning experience of reflection about an experience. Reflection is potentially more interactive and requires a more sophisticated level of thinking. It requires one to imagine, weigh possibilities and draw conclusions. In other words, is there something significant about the combination of the objective and subjective learning approach? Clearly, something took place for the group that only read the workbook for their worldview developmental change score to go backwards. Something also happened for those who both read and reflected to influence positive and nearly significant development. This study did not have enough power in numbers to draw confident conclusions. Still, these findings are worthy of further investigation.

**Spiritual and Religious Tension Experienced**

The researcher collected data and analyzed the participants’ self-report about the tension they experienced related to cultural differences, especially spiritual and religious differences. The descriptive statistic found that while there was a positive relationship, it

---

did not prove to be a significant correlation between tension and the worldview
developmental change score.

Michael Paige, a leading intercultural educator, conjectured that there are specific
intensity and risk factors that are primary sources of tension in cross-cultural
experiences.\textsuperscript{212} His hypotheses have been a catalyst for research, such as this thesis study.
In this study’s second questionnaire, ten questions were asked regarding intensity and
risk factors, nine of which came from Paige’s conjectures. This thesis researcher added
one question in the study’s questionnaire that Paige did not suggest. This researcher
added a question to identify stress experienced due to spiritual and religious dissonance.
To this researcher, the absence of this conjecture is a glaring omission in Paige’s list of
hypothesis.

In the reliability analysis of the participants’ report about tension, however, this
question and one other did not load well with the other questions and so they were
dropped from the correlation analysis. The reliability analysis demonstrated that the
remaining cluster of eight questions that were analyzed for correlation regarding tension
fit together with an acceptable alpha score ($\alpha=.8703$, Table 4.8).

The raw data from the one question that queried about religious and spiritual
stress and discomfort experienced during the cross-cultural experience suggests that a
high degree of tension took place related to this intensity factor. Thirty-five percent of the
total participants reported that to varying degrees they did not experience tension related
to spirituality and religion, while 64 percent reported that they did (Table 6.2).

\textsuperscript{212} R. Michael Paige, “On the Nature of Intercultural Experiences and Intercultural Education,” in
\textit{Education for the Intercultural Experience}, 2nd ed., ed. R. Michael Paige (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural
Table 6.2. Tension due to religious and spiritual stress and discomfort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q: I experienced religious and spiritual stress/uneasiness/discomfort during my cross-cultural experience. N=92</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>False/True Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly False</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly False</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly True</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly True</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely True</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know/Not Applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of this one question was not conducted because a correlation analysis of just one question could appear to be fishing for conclusions. The data prompts the researcher to conclude that this question of tension due to spiritual and religious dissonance requires more focused research. A collection of questions about tension related to spirituality and religion might have strengthened the research.

Therefore, a possible weakness of this study is that it attempted to study too many variables, following the lead of the reviewed literature, and should have focused more narrowly and heavily on tension questions regarding spiritual and religious intensity. A possible strength of the study is that there is a base of evidence that spiritual and religious tension is an intensity factor. To what degree is not yet known and could be added to Paige’s list of hypotheses for future research.
Confounding Variable Differences

True to most quasi-experimental research designs, independent variables must be factored into the phenomenon under study. The potential confounding variables in this study are numerous. These variables are also the reality for research in the field of intercultural education. It also is one of the reasons underlying the problem that the university in this study’s setting is facing in order to meet its world citizen curriculum goals.

The purpose of this study’s measurement tool two, the questionnaire entitled Religious and Spiritual Experience During a Cross-Cultural Study Abroad, was to gather data about these variables to support the research question. The questions addressed participant demographics relevant to the study, preparation, study abroad conditions, tension, and processing. The questionnaire (Appendix) did not broach variables related to personality and psychological health. Noted in table 4.4 are questions that showed ten percentage points or more difference between the control and treatment groups.

To limit the scope of this study and maintain statistical integrity, descriptive analysis was not conducted to explore correlations between all of the data collected on confounding variables. The temptation is to draw conclusions based on speculation and conjectures about these variables without applying the power of statistical analysis, especially given that the alternative hypothesis \( H_1 \) was proven false. The researcher would like to know more specifically why the alternative hypothesis did not prove true. More pointedly, why did the control group show a significant IDI average change score and the treatment group did not? Did certain independent variables over-power the effect of the intervention?
Many educators are curious about these independent variables related to transformative worldview development. They want to know more about the key intensity factors and pedagogies, content and study abroad conditions so as to support cross-cultural sojourners to process these factors.

Giving in to this temptation to draw conclusions without sophisticated data analysis, however, would not support a postpositivist methodology. Rather, the researcher limited descriptive statistics to two measures of interest: tension and processing. These two areas were most related to the phenomenon under study. With this adherence to the methodology and the research focus, what the data collection does provide is a fuller description of the scenario. It also offers a base measurement for future research about these variables as they do prompt questions about the differences that they might make and the search for ways to better control them.

The data collection suggests three areas to consider for future research. These three areas are study abroad location, formal culture preparation and in-country study and opportunities for engagement with host culture people. Table 4.3 offers the list of questions related to confounding variables and the participant results showing the contrast between the control and treatment groups.

One of the marked differences between the control and treatment groups was the percentage of participants who studied in particular culture regions. Sixty-seven percent of the treatment group studied in Europe and 18 percent of the control group studied in this culture region, which would seem to be more familiar to the participants. In contrast, 67 percent of the control group studied in culture regions that could be considered
distinctly different from the participants’ home culture (46 percent in Latin America and 21 percent in Sub Sahara Africa).

A common speculation and the second confounding variable that educators ponder is that the culture region where students study abroad will make a difference in how much they develop intercultural sensitivity. The conjecture is that if the culture is similar to the sojourners’ home culture, then they are not faced with the intensity of cultural tension that they might face if the culture were distinctly different. Sojourners would also not have as many opportunities to work through tension with the hopes of developing intercultural competencies. This conjecture is, of course, relative to the sojourner, the experience and the host culture. For example, though a high percentage of the treatment group studied in Europe, 59 percent also reported that their host culture’s religion was distinctly different from their own. This would suggest that the treatment group was aware of differences. Whether or not they engaged in deeper exploration about the differences is not known, though there is room for speculation given the change score results.

A second variable for further investigation with this study as a base measurement is the participants’ formal preparation and in-country learning about culture and differences. The collection of questions to address this topic asked about study of different religions, host country language, host culture and culture in general. The control group showed marked higher percentage differences in all of these areas as compared to the treatment group. The treatment group showed marked higher percentage differences in having minimal formal education about culture.
Seventy-seven percent of the control group participants reported having studied religion prior to study abroad in contrast to 60 percent of the treatment group. Sixty percent of the control group reported studying the host country language before the study abroad and 68 percent of the treatment group reported that they had not. Nearly the same percentage of participants from both groups, however, reported studying language during the study abroad.

Preparation through formal study about the host country culture and culture in general is another area of interest for intercultural educators. Also of keen interest is the difference that formal preparation actually makes on sojourners’ culture adjustment and preparedness to move from a surface level of cultural engagement to a deeper, more complex level. On this topic, this study’s data shows that prior to departure 74 percent of the treatment group reported having had zero to five hours of formal study about the culture in which they lived as compared to 54 percent of the control group. To show a contrast related to amount and potential depth of culture study, however, 70 percent of the control group had one or more courses about culture in general prior to departure in contrast to 46 percent of the treatment group having this same type of study. Again in distinct contrast, 74 percent of the control group had one or more courses about the culture while in-country and 50 percent of the treatment group had the same. These marked differences surely should spark speculation and research about the impact of formal education about culture and differences prior to and during the sojourn experience.
A third variable in which the data revealed marked differences between the control and treatment group falls under the topic of opportunity for and engagement in meaningful relationships with host culture people. It is these types of experiences where deep transformational worldview learning can take place. This study’s questionnaire hints at the kinds of opportunities and levels of engagement that the participants may or may not have had.

One set of questions was related to living accommodations. Participants were asked about who they lived with, whether mostly host country people or people from their same culture. The data indicates that 68 percent of the control group lived mostly with host country people, whether in a home or university residence hall. Eleven percent lived mostly with western students and 4 percent reported living in some other kind of housing situation. This latter accommodation may have been a hotel type of setting. In distinct contrast, the treatment group reported that 27 percent lived mostly with host country people, and 51 percent lived with mostly western students. Fourteen percent of the treatment group reported living in some other accommodation. Also of note is that 74 percent of the treatment group studied with a Home University program. This could indicate that the majority of the treatment group lived with western students and were also students from their home university, limiting the participants’ engagement with people distinctly different from their own university culture. In the control group, the percentages were nearly equal for those studying in Home University programs to that of affiliate programs.

A second set of questions that related to opportunities and experiences of engagement with host culture people included questions about host culture interaction
and culture mentors. There were five questions asking about interaction with host culture people. It was left to the participants to interpret what they meant by “interaction.” The answers that show distinct contrast between the two groups are the average number of hours of daily interaction with host country people. Seventy percent of the control group reported spending three or more hours of daily interaction with host country people and the treatment group reported 53 percent. When asked about how often they interacted with people of different religions, 64 percent of the control group reported almost daily interaction and 55 percent of the treatment group reported the same. Finally, 91 percent of the control group reported having a host country mentor to discuss cultural differences and 62 percent of the treatment group reported the same.

While speculation about these areas as the potential confounding variables that may have influenced the study’s results is encouraged, drawing sound conclusions is not. The data results, however, indicate topics worthy of further study.

*Developmental Intercultural Sensitivity Profile*

A final point of discussion is the outcome of the participants’ average overall developmental intercultural sensitivity profile. The IDI developmental pre- and post-comparative scores and the profile narratives showed that there was no significant change in worldview development for these participants. Overall, their change scores were positive but showed little movement in the DMIS profile domain of Minimization with trailing issues in Reversal. This demonstrates that the participants made incremental development in exploring culture on surface levels. It also indicates that they view cultural differences largely from the lens of an ethnocentric worldview, not yet able to recognize that there are impactful differences below the surface. Trailing issues in
reversal means that while the participants are not likely to be defensive about their own culture, the respondents tend to reverse the cultural defense from their own culture to another, unable to recognize and evaluate assets and vices in both cultures.

A normative comparison using individual participants’ post-developmental scores that are closest to the same participants’ average score shows the range residing between the 30th to 40th percentile. This means that between 70 and 60 percent of the population generally measures at higher developmental scores than do these individuals’ scores.

It would seem that the question is whether or not the students, educators and institution are satisfied with this degree of development given the normative comparisons. Though this question is not the focus of this research study, the results do serve as a base measurement and pilot study from which the institution can make pedagogical and programmatic decisions to set and meet their goals. To help answer this question of whether or not this is an acceptable outcome, comparative study results would help to determine a reasonable anticipated developmental change score and profile.

A study similar to this thesis study is the AFS Study Abroad assessment, the most comprehensive study of secondary student study abroad experiences in 25 years. In this study, the total participants improved its developmental score 2 points, whereas this study of university students total post-measurement improved by 3.65. The control group average change score was 5.06 and the treatment group was 1.79. Both study’s average developmental profile remained at the beginning of Minimization, with some trailing issues in Reversal. 213

---

A distinguishing aspect between these studies is the difference between the respective institutions’ objectives. This may be a developmentally acceptable change for the AFS study abroad program for a high school student. Is it for a university student? This study’s participants are older and are also completing additional required general education course work in language, world cultures and comparative systems between cultures. Another question is how well the description of Minimization as a worldview orientation matches that of the students’ and institution’s goals to nurture students to be mature and culturally relevant world changers.

A second study to compare results to is the 2004-2006 Bethel Seminary study in which a variety of teaching methods are used to meet the institution’s goals. The importance of the Bethel Seminary study as a comparative measure is that the participants’ openness to spiritual and religious matters and the institutional world citizen goals are similar as they are members of the same university. Like the AFS study, a difference is the participants’ level of education. The Seminary participants are studying at the graduate level and the College of Arts and Sciences participants are undergraduate students. Another major difference was that the Seminary learning was through a traditional, 10-week classroom experience, not a 14 to 17 week immersion experience in another culture. In the Seminary study, two classes were measured. The Seminary average post-measurement change scores were 8.39 and 11.83, respectively. Both classes remained in the same worldview, being Minimization.214

Given these three points of comparison—IDI normative comparison table, AFS study and the Bethel Seminary study—the response is mixed. The normative comparison

of this study seems discouraging given the participants’ comparison to a larger and more
diverse population. The AFS and Bethel Seminary studies and populations are more
similar in results, however. Still, the Seminary study’s average change scores were
higher than this study’s change scores. As more empirical research is conducted, such as
this study, the more realistic intercultural educators can be in setting outcomes and
developing pedagogy and its content to support those outcomes.

Conclusion

Though the hypothesis did not prove true, this study advances the field’s
knowledge and offers grounds for further research. Following the literature reviewed, the
study shows that the study abroad experience supports worldview development. Most
notable, the findings regarding intervention dosage indicate there was possible significant
intervention effect. Greater limitations that would require participants to apply the
intervention and increase sample numbers would strengthen a future study. Insufficient
conclusions can be drawn regarding the effect of processing spiritual and religious
tension during the study abroad, though there is data that would justify further, more
focused study on this topic. The study also serves as a pilot study from which a
researcher can justify the need to explore assumptions about effective intercultural
education pedagogy and content, as well as the influence of potential confounding
variables. It also serves as a benchmark for the setting’s institution and other universities
and organizations similar to its mission to compare worldview development as a result of
their study abroad programs.
CHAPTER SEVEN

REFLECTION

Introduction

The world is ablaze with the strife that intercultural conflicts continue to fuel. The world needs skilled firefighters—interculturally competent world citizens—who know how to put out the fires and create peaceful and thriving playgrounds where transformational innovations are created and thrive. The emerging field of intercultural studies is a fascinating, interdisciplinary, theoretical and experiential playground. Interculturalists sense that their play is more than a cognitive exchange in the academy; it is a holistic endeavor, a passion and a conviction that the increasingly interconnected world needs this thriving field if its people are going to live peacefully together.

More challenging and perhaps more immediate is the overarching goal that motivated this project, which is to develop interculturally competent people whereby peaceful and productive cross-cultural relationships can flourish to bring about innovative and transformative world change. The current quandary is how to support people to develop this worldview shift. Therefore, the intercultural educator’s charge is to search for the most effective method to develop people to be interculturally competent. As an intercultural educator, this was the task to which this researcher committed herself to learn through this project and bring leadership to the field.
Growth and Goals, Now and for the Future

One of the researcher’s goals is to bring this study’s results to the field of intercultural studies to stimulate serious discussion about the impact of spiritual and religious dissonance during cross-cultural sojourns. The reviewed literature revealed that there is little being explored that specifically addresses spirituality and religion as a key intensity factor impacting worldview development. This thesis study clearly suggests that spirituality and religion are contributing intensity factor during the cross-cultural engagement and phenomenon needs further research. If intercultural educators’ goal is to support the development of transformational intercultural leaders, then they need someone to bring spirituality and religion as an intensity factor to the surface for dialogue. With the hope to bring new knowledge to inform the assumptions and conjectures in the field, the researcher tackled the challenge of a quantitative method because of the subjective nature of spirituality and religion. She concluded that quantitative data would help to quell the sometimes volatile or dismissive dialogues about religion. The dialogue needs sound research to inform the speculation and conjectures. This study offers sound data for the dialogue. Therefore, the researcher has several goals for how to raise the topic for dialogue, offering new knowledge from sound empirical research.

Writing, Rewriting and Publishing the Intervention

One of the most powerful and deepest areas of growth for the researcher in conducting this thesis research was the collection of experiences that brought her to be able to write the intervention, that being the workbook “The Spiritual Cross-Cultural
Sojourner: Seeking the Sacred and Peace With Others.” The researcher’s experiential and intellectual journey started long ago but was intensified through increased partnerships and friendships with people from other lands, especially those with whom she shared the proclivity to ask big and mysterious questions about existence, purpose, meaning and the sacred. The process of bringing the knowledge together in a concrete and public product in the workbook was incredibly provocative and creative, challenging her intellect and integrity to carefully assert sound and theologically grounded claims about the phenomenon of seeking the sacred through alterity.

The goal for future growth that comes out of the writing of the intervention is already in process and foresees much learning and focus ahead. The goal is to revise and publish the intervention workbook. Three things encourage this goal. First, a majority of the respondents affirmed the value of the workbook and recommended its use to future study abroad students. Second, three faculty who teach courses with an intercultural competence goal affirmed the value of the workbook and have required students to use it as preparation for a study abroad. Anecdotal reports from the teachers and students are positive. Third, two students who have gone abroad with a faith-based organization have used the workbook as preparation for their experience and then used the reflective framework to process the experience. Both students reported it as extremely helpful as preparation and to use the reflective framework while in-country.

With this encouragement, the researcher’s goal is to explore publishers and multiple delivery formats for faculty and students at the researcher’s university and beyond. The research findings can inform and enhance her revision of the workbook for
publication. Who the audience might be for a revised workbook is a decision that the researcher must make strategically and with a publisher’s guidance.

This publishing goal comes from a clear desire to continue to influence the field of intercultural studies, both in her local setting and in the broader context. Its publication and use could invigorate and further inform intercultural trainers about sojourner’s spiritual and religious tension, how to productively process it and its relationship to worldview development.

Publications and Presentations

In addition to the future goal to publish a revised workbook in order to influence a broader context, the researcher plans to submit proposals to present her research to various audiences. The first audience is to present the study’s findings to the research setting’s administrators and faculty with hopes that this will influence conversation and change in the setting’s programs. A second audience that the research would like to present to is international studies program administrators and faculty at universities similar in mission as this study’s setting, such as schools affiliated with the Consortium of Christian Colleges and Universities. The third audience is members of professional organizations who attend the annual conferences. The researcher plans to submit proposals to present portions of the research at national and international conferences.

The researcher also plans to submit portions of the study for publication in various related professional trade and refereed journals. Again, this is in hope of stimulating the conversation to further develop perspectives and best practices to support sojourners.
Qualitative Research From Data Collected

The ideal method to support research of this study’s phenomenon is a mixed-method design. The leaders in intercultural education indicate that in order to establish a solid grounding, research should use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.\textsuperscript{215} The reality to take on this task, however, was against the repeated advice that “a good thesis is a done thesis.” This advice clinched the decision to keep the qualitative endeavor as post-doctoral work. Still, to follow the ideal, the research also gathered narratives from the participants while collecting the quantitative data in the closed-ended tools. The researcher asked all of the participants to describe critical incidents with spiritual and religious tension and how they processed it. Therefore, follow-up research to continue to study this phenomenon is to conduct content analysis of the narrative data. The intention is to share this new knowledge with the field, continuing to follow the initial catalyst and goal of the project.

Cross-Cultural Sojourners

At the core of this study is the researcher’s call to teach. Why? Her motivation is to impact lives, relationships and communities, one person at a time. Therefore, an area of growth as a result of this thesis study is honing her pedagogy and choosing her content for the cross-cultural sojourners who sit under tutelage. This goal is already underway. For example, using what she was learning from the data and writing her workbook, she designed and taught a study abroad course. One of the primary course goals was to develop students’ intercultural competencies through a cross-cultural immersion

\textsuperscript{215} Deardorff, “Intercultural Competence,” 46.
experience. She led ten students to Jordan for four weeks to study how Jordanian Arabs are bringing innovative change to their society. The teacher/researcher experienced incredible satisfaction that came from designing a learning experience with this intent based on knowledge she gained from this thesis research. By all indications, the students who took the course did expand their capacity to engage deeply in cross-cultural relationships while embracing and processing the tension that come from the risks they took.

As a leader in intercultural education, the researcher is already in the role of working with her colleagues and Bethel University to design effective courses and experiences for students to meet the institution’s curriculum goals and mission. The researcher hopes that this role will continue as she seeks to teach and influence the development of intercultural competence in the lives of cross-cultural sojourners. It is this one-on-one interaction that is most inspiring and motivating her to continue her personal and professional growth and expertise.

The application of what the researcher has learned clearly goes beyond educational institutions and their study abroad programs and students. This application is also a unique characteristic about the field of intercultural education. For example, members of the field’s professional associations and conference attendees come from the marketplace, non-profit and faith-based organizations, as well as the academy. This characteristic is a great advantage to influence best practice of educators and trainers because it seeks and welcomes multiple perspectives, experiences, values and ways of believing in order to synergistically create excellent practice. This characteristic upholds a core value of the field: crossing borders. It also supports a motivating conviction in the
field: seeking and welcoming multiple perspectives offer the potential for richer results. The people and places in need of intercultural educators are great and the researcher is already entering these places beyond the academia.

**Conclusion**

In many ways, the researcher is a different person now than when she began this thesis and doctoral program. Most prominently, she has advanced her intercultural competence and her worldview has shifted. She can sense this in her daily perspectives and responses to worldview differences. As a result of this project, especially in the writing of the intervention, she is deeply aware of the meta-process taking place to affect this change.

Secondly, this thesis offers a plethora of opportunities to influence her local and broader context in the charge of teaching others. She is sharing this experience, knowledge and expertise with students, colleagues, program administrators and non-profit organizations. Through writing, teaching, further research, publishing and presentations, the researcher will continue the sojourn as a learner and leader in the field of intercultural education, while continuing to seek the sacred and peace with others.
APPENDIX

MEASUREMENT TOOL TWO: RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

DURING THE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY ABROAD QUESTIONNAIRE
Religious & Spiritual Experience During a Cross-Cultural Study Abroad

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire, along with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), because you agreed to participate in a study about worldview and your spiritual experience during your cross-cultural study abroad. This questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please complete it in one sitting. The full completion is very important to the integrity of the study. Your responses will be kept confidential. After the data is compiled, your name and ID will no longer be attached to the data and your name will be entered into a drawing for one of four $25 Amazon.com certificates.

1. Gender: Female Male

2. Race/Ethnicity:
   - African American
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - Asian American or Pacific Islander
   - Caucasian
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Indian
   - Multiracial
   - Other

3. Age:
   - Under 18
   - 18
   - 19
   - 20
   - 21
   - 22 or 23
   - 24 and older

4. Intended Major?

5. What was the primary country in which you studied?

6. Was the primary language spoken in the host country/ies in which you studied different than your primary use language?
   - Yes
   - No
7. Did you study a language of your host country before departure?
   Yes    No

8. Did you study a language of your host country while in the country?
   Yes    No

9. Does your major require a study abroad experience?
   Yes    No

10. During this study abroad experience, was there a HOST country person(s) whom you would consider a cultural mentor, someone who explained to you the cultural behavior, attitudes and values?
    Yes    No

11. During this study abroad experience, was there a NON-host country person(s) whom you would consider a cultural mentor, someone who explained to you the cultural behavior, attitudes and values?
    Yes    No

12. Had you studied other religions previous to your study abroad?
    Yes    No

13. Choose your TOP THREE purposes for your openness to consider religions different from your own? "I am curious for the purpose of . . .

    o understanding others' search for truth
    o furthering my search for truth
    o defending the religion I claim as my own
    o integrating other religious practices into my own
    o being able to engage in informed mutual conversation with other people
    o persuading others to convert to Christianity
    o Other
14. BEFORE your departure, about how many hours of FORMAL study did you have about culture IN GENERAL?
   - 0-5 hours
   - 6-15 hours
   - 16-39 hours
   - 40 or more hours
   - 1 course
   - 2 or more courses

15. BEFORE your departure, about how many hours of FORMAL study did you have about the culture IN WHICH YOU STUDIED?
   - 0-5 hours
   - 6-15 hours
   - 16-39 hours
   - 40 or more hours
   - 1 course
   - 2 or more courses

16. DURING your study abroad, about how many hours of formal study did you have about the culture in which you studied?
   - 0-5 hours
   - 6-15 hours
   - 16-39 hours
   - 40 or more hours
   - 1 course
   - 2 or more courses

17. The following questions ask about your previous cross-cultural experience. If this study abroad experience is your first cross-cultural experience (i.e. an experience in which the majority of people around you were of a different culture than your own), skip to question 21 (about your primary housing arrangement). In your previous cross-cultural experience, did you live in a sustained cross-cultural community for six months or more between the ages of 1-12?
   - Yes
   - No

18. In your previous cross-cultural experience, did you live in a sustained cross-cultural community for six months or more between the ages of 13-18?
   - Yes
   - No
19. How many times have you experienced a cross-cultural immersion in a culture distinctly different from your own for four or more weeks (exclude experiences in which the majority of people around you were of the same culture as you, such as a resort vacation)?

   o 1
   o 2
   o 3
   o 4
   o 5 or more

20. What was the primary purpose of your previous cross-cultural experience(s)? Check all that apply.

   o Missions/Humanitarian
   o Tourism
   o Education
   o Other

21. What was your PRIMARY housing arrangement during this study abroad?

   o Host country family
   o Host country family with 1-2 other study abroad residents
   o Host country family with 3 or more other study abroad residents
   o Campus residential living with mostly host country residents
   o Campus residential living with mostly other Western students (North Americans, Europeans, Australians)
   o Accommodations living mostly with other Western students (North Americans, Europeans, Australians)
   o Accommodations living mostly with host country people/person
   o Other

22. On average, estimate the amount of daily interaction you had with your host family or host country residents.

   o Less than one hour a day
   o One hour a day
   o Two hours a day
   o More than three hours a day
23. On average, estimate the amount of observational or verbal interaction you had with people who had a different religious behavior or conviction than your own.

- Almost every day
- Almost every week
- A couple of times a month
- Hardly ever
- Never

24. The dominant religious affiliation or practice in the host country in which you studied is (If the religion is not listed below, move to the next question for more options):

- I didn't notice.
- I didn't see evidence of a dominant religion.
- I'm not sure.
- Christian: Protestant
- Christian: Catholic or Orthodox (Greek, Catholic, Russian, etc.)
- Buddhism
- Hindu
- Islam
- Judaism
- Other

Indicate your response to the following statements using the definitions and scale below.

For the statements below, use the following definitions for:

RELIGION/RELIGIOUS = a common set of beliefs, values and practices (i.e. communion, baptism, traditions) held by a group of people that inform them of what is right and wrong, how to live life and how to make sense of the meaning and essence of life

SPIRITUAL = a person's individual and/or collective reflection, experience and interaction with the Divine (God)

- Definitely False
- Mostly False
- Slightly False
- Slightly True
- Mostly True
- Definitely True
- I don't know/Not Applicable
26. I had a positive cross-cultural experience during my study abroad.
27. The religion I observed/experienced in the host country in which I studied is distinctly different from my own.
28. During my cross-cultural experience, I became curious about spirituality, different religious practices and other religions.
29. During my cross-cultural experience, I became comfortable LIVING in a country in which the religious beliefs and/or practices are different from my own.
30. During my cross-cultural experience, I became comfortable INTERACTING with people for whom their religious beliefs and/or practices are different from my own.
31. During my cross-cultural experience, I became comfortable TALKING ABOUT RELIGION with people for whom their religious beliefs and/or practices are different from my own.
32. I experienced religious and spiritual stress/uneasiness/discomfort during my cross-cultural experience.
33. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, my religious (see definition above) experience has changed for the positive.
34. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, my spiritual (see definition above) experience has changed for the positive.
35. When I experienced tension about religious and/or spiritual matters, I KNEW HOW TO WORK THROUGH my experience.
36. When I experienced tension about religious and/or spiritual matters, I WORKED THROUGH my experience.
37. During my cross-cultural experience, I journaled about my religious and/or spiritual experience.
38. During my cross-cultural experience, I talked to God about my religious and/or spiritual experience.
39. During my cross-cultural experience, I talked with a person from MY CULTURE about the different religious practices or beliefs to seek an understanding of the differences.
40. During my cross-cultural experience, I talked with a person from THE HOST COUNTRY about the different religious practices or beliefs to seek an understanding of the differences.

41. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I have more questions about religion/spirituality than when I began the study abroad.

42. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I INTERACT differently with God than before I studied abroad.

43. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I UNDERSTAND God differently than before I studied abroad.

44. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I am reconsidering how I practice my spiritual experience (see definition above) from before I studied abroad.

45. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I am more certain about my religious convictions (see definition above) than before I studied abroad.

46. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I understand the essential beliefs of my religion (see definition above) differently from before I studied abroad.

47. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I practice my religion (see definition above) differently than before I studied abroad.

48. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I have an increased UNDERSTANDING OF HOW culture influences religious practice and/or spirituality.

49. During my cross-cultural experience, I NOTICED how my host country's culture influences religious practice and/or spirituality, generally speaking.

50. During my cross-cultural experience, I came to UNDERSTAND the cultural influences for WHY MY HOST culture practices religion and spirituality as they do, generally speaking.

51. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, my worldview is changing.

52. I can articulately describe what I learned about differences in cultural BEHAVIOR in my host country.

53. I can articulately describe what I learned about differences in cultural VALUES in my host country.

54. I can articulately describe what I learned about worldview differences.
55. My cross-cultural study abroad experience had no impact on my SPIRITUAL GROWTH (see definition above).
56. My cross-cultural study abroad experience had no impact on my RELIGIOUS PRACTICE (see definition above).
57. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I have considered converting to a religion different than what I had believed before I began my study abroad experience.
58. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, my value of RELIGIOUS differences has increased.
59. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, my value of SPIRITUAL differences has increased.
60. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I have noticed that I interact with others about religious (see definition above) matters differently than before I began this study abroad experience.
61. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I have noticed that I interact with others about spiritual (see definition above) matters differently than before I began this study abroad experience.
62. As a result of my cross-cultural experience, I value differences in worldview.
63. I felt the stress of being culturally isolated from others from my own culture during a majority portion of my study abroad experience.
64. I felt the stress of being culturally immersed in the host culture during a majority portion of my study abroad experience.
65. In my host country, it was highly visible to the people of the country that I am physically different from them.
66. I felt the stress of not feeling the respect that I deserved or of receiving undeserved recognition from those in my host culture.
67. I felt the stress of feeling invisible to members of the host culture because its people did not or could not accept important aspects of my identity.
68. My expectations of my cultural experience in my study abroad location were realistic.
69. I experienced stress because I had little access to those from my own culture group.
70. I experienced stress because, generally speaking, I did not have power nor control in the intercultural experiences.

71. To process my spiritual and religious experience(s), I read from the Bible to seek instruction and comfort.

72. To process my spiritual and religious experience(s), I read from a sacred text from a religion other than Christianity to seek instruction and comfort.

73. I felt stressed by the ethnocentric behavior that the host culture exhibited.

74. I felt stressed by the degree of cultural difference of the host culture to that of my own culture.

75. I have a low degree of value for the religion (see definition above) of my host country.

76. I have a low degree of value for the spirituality (see definition above) of my host country.

Questions Asked Only of Treatment Participants: Spring 2009 and Fall 2009

Use the scales below to answer the following questions.

77. On average, I reflected through journaling or/and conversations about cultural differences, often reflecting on differences related to beliefs, spirituality and religion.

   - 3-5 times a week
   - 1-2 times a week
   - 1-3 times a month
   - Hardly ever
   - Never

78. When I reflected on cultural differences, I used the models offered in Naomi’s workbook of the Emic-Etic Interchange and the Cultural Learning Cycle, learning about perspectives of my culture and the host culture(s).

   - Always
   - Frequently
   - Sometimes
   - Hardly ever
   - Never
79. I read and/or worked through Naomi’s workbook, The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner
   All Partially None

80. I would recommend the use of The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner to future Bethel study abroad students.
   Yes Yes, with revision No

81. The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner should be required of all Bethel study abroad students
   Yes Yes, with revision No

Questions Asked of All Participants

82. Think about a time during your study abroad experience or a string of experiences in which you encountered a religious and/or spiritual behavior, belief or relationship different from what you had known before your travel that impacted you in a significant way. Describe this/these experience(s) (question 1) and then answer the following questions about it (questions 2-5). Give attention to your full sensory experience: emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual description. In the space provided, write at least one paragraph (5-7 complete sentences) per question. Question 1: Briefly describe your experience or string of experiences so that the reader understands the context and experience. Speak to each sensory description.

83. Question 2: Narrow in with more depth and specificity on one of the sensory tensions that was most significant for you in this experience.

84. Question 3: How did you work through the experience? Then, evaluate its effectiveness to decrease your tension.

85. Question 4: What did you learn from this experience with religious/spiritual difference?

86. Question 5: What impact do you think this experience will have on you in your return to your home?

87. Please add your feedback and suggestions about the content and format of The Spiritual Cross-Cultural Sojourner. For example, are there topics that you think should be added or deleted from the workbook? Was it too long or too short? Should it be in a paper format or a CD or website for you to access while abroad? All constructive feedback will be appreciated.


