

# **MULTI-CROSS-INTER-CULTURAL LIVING**

## **1. ARE HUMAN BEINGS MOSTLY MONOCULTURAL?**

- Born and raised in a single, homogeneous cultural/linguistic world.
- Ethnocentric: predisposed to see things from a single perspective.
- Resistant to thinking differently?
- Not bi-cultural?
- Not “wired” for intercultural living?
- Humans appear to have a “sensitive period” early in life, which passes.
- The older a person, the more difficult cultural/linguistic adaptation is.
- From informal to formal: from informal learning /assimilation of one's own language to the formal/study-based learning of a second language after already being literate in one's own.

## **2. MULTICULTURAL LIVING**

- This is *de facto* living among people of different cultures
- Cultural differences exist, and can be dealt with by:
  - **Eliminating** differences (genocide, relocation, assimilation, uniformity)
  - **Blending or tolerating** differences (Melting pot; Salad bowl; Mosaic)
  - **Managing** differences
    - Negative: separation: *chacun pour soi*: everyone is for him/herself.
    - Negative: everyone *liminal* all the time; no one is really comfortable.
    - Positive: Chorus – accommodate wide-ranging, different skills.
    - Positive: Orchestra – seek real variety of instruments.
    - Positive: Chorus and orchestra need different kinds of leadership.

### 3. **CROSS-CULTURAL LIVING**

- This is commitment to living outside one's 'natural' cultural environment.
- It means living *in someone else's* 'natural' cultural environment (stranger).
- It may leave people "in between," "in both", "in neither," "in-beyond." (Lee)
- It requires *commitment to active learning* of another culture.
- It requires *more than simple or formal hospitality by the insiders*.
- It demands (knowledge of) rules, expectations and responsibilities.
- It can produce *acculturation* (positive or negative)

### 4. **INTERCULTURAL LIVING**

This should be the aim of people living in intentional, international religious/faith communities. It is **not** easy, normal, or even possible for everyone. ***It is a faith-based project.*** It requires:

- Intentionality (A 'common project' – not just projects of works)
- Tolerance of ambiguity, immaturity, mistakes.
- A forum for 'venting' frustrations.
- Appropriate correction, genuine listening, flexibility.
- Commitment to ongoing dialogue and development.
- Attention to overload, stress, differences, misunderstanding.
- Encouragement, compassion, concern.
- Clarification of vision, goals, strategies, commitments.

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