

BECOMING AWARE OF YOUR OWN CULTURE

Culture Shapes Our Understanding of the World

- Culture is the lens through which we see the world, others, and even ourselves
- When you are not in your own culture you may feel displaced, uncomfortable, and very aware of your differences
- Example from Daniel Hill's book, "White Awake"

Primary Goal of International Work

- To help students who choose to go home to be prepared to return as global disciples and leaders
- We are called to help students become world changers in their home culture, not ours
- But the reality is, that their faith will inevitably be influenced and even shaped as they interact with us
- We should not, we must not, judge other cultures by our own, since every culture has glorious creativity and beauty, as well as ugly fallenness and sin

Paternalism

- Our posture toward others must be one of equality and mutuality
- Paternalism is doing ministry in ways that do not empower those receiving ministry to reciprocate or learn to grow on their own
 - It perpetuates the notion of unequal relationship
 - The alternative ideal we seek is partnership, which is a relationship of collaboration that involves shared leadership and mutual service

What Does Paternalism Look Like in International Student Ministry?

- When we are always being the one to serve others, rather than recognizing that we too need to be served
 - In the way we share the gospel
 - Using evangelistic phrases and methods that emerge from North American culture and are contextualized for that audience
 - Our gospel approach tends to underemphasize the importance of family and community, something other cultures value quite highly
 - The leadership and planning of our international gatherings or fellowships
 - They need to move from guest, to family, to influence if they are to be well prepared as global disciples
 - If North Americans are always in charge it undermines the international's own growth and their gifts in leadership
 - Using direct communication to a culture that communicates indirectly
 - How we think of preparing students for return
 - For some, this can actually be a life or death decision
 - We cannot assume that return is always their best option
 - If return is their choice, thoughtful preparation is vital to their flourishing
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