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## Abstract

### Contextualized Training for Missionaries:

#### A Brazilian Model

As a result of the growth of Christianity in the traditional mission fields of the modern Protestant missionary movement, and as the churches in those fields have matured, the task of world mission has become a shared endeavor between the traditional and younger missionary-sending churches. One of the significant participants in the younger churches' outward-looking mission movement is Brazil, a new sending country that is poised to assume a strategic role in twenty-first century global missions.

A serious problem plaguing the Brazilian mission movement, however, is that of attrition. One method of addressing the problem, suggested often in the literature, is through adequate training of mission candidates. Against this background, the question that drives this study concerns how those who prepare missionary candidates in Brazil can shape the training experience in a way that is informed by and geared toward the formational cultural characteristics and needs of Brazilian mission candidates.

In order to research this issue, a grounded theory approach was utilized whereby data was collected from the international literature on missionary training, from the Brazilian and international literature on Brazilian culture, and from interviews with Brazilian missionaries, missionary trainers, and mission agency executives. This data was analyzed and developed in a constant comparative method, leading to the development of a contextualized Brazilian model for preparing missionaries.

The model that emerged contains six broad categories. The first is Native Cultural Awareness, which refers to ways to help the candidate develop an appreciation



for his or her own culture. The second category, Crosscultural Capacity, explores issues in helping Brazilian mission candidates to appreciate the differences between their culture and the anticipated host culture. Theological and Missiological Foundation is a category that looks at issues in developing a solid missiological and theological foundation for students shaped by the Brazilian context. Other categories explored include Emotional and Spiritual Maturity, which focuses on developing the inner life; Relational Capacity, which explores issues in getting Brazilian candidates ready to work with mission colleagues and national Christians; and Task Readiness, which encompasses the task of helping candidates to identify and develop their spiritual gifts through experience in ministry.

While every one of these six categories could be relevant for any cultural context, the primary value of this study lies in the fact that it represents an intentional effort to value Brazilian culture and approach mission training from a perspective that takes into account a series of issues that are specific to the Brazilian context. Another contribution made by the study is in delineating a methodology for cultural analysis with a focus on practical implications for missionary training in that specific setting. This is a methodology that can be replicated in other cultural contexts, making the model itself relevant beyond a specific Brazilian focus.

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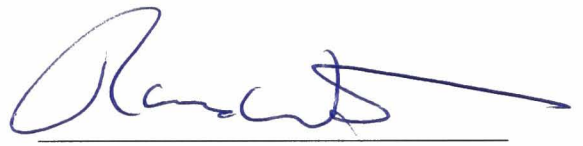
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A BRAZILIAN MODEL

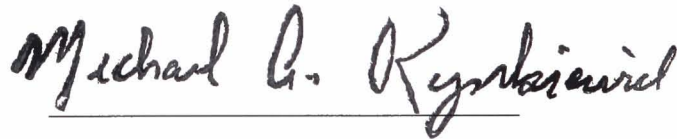
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CONTEXTUALIZED TRAINING FOR MISSIONARIES:  
A BRAZILIAN MODEL

by  
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## Chapter 1

### Brazil and World Mission

#### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter begins with some autobiographical remarks that shed light on the author's interest in this study. It then traces the development of the Brazilian evangelical mission movement and the promise that movement holds for making a significant contribution to the mission of the global church. Following this, the author identifies the missiological assumptions that inform this study, states the questions to be researched, defines the significance of the study, describes the methodology used in the research, defines terms, places delimitations on the study, and outlines the organization of the study.

#### Opening Remarks

Since 1996, I have served on the faculty of the South Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil as professor of missions. Previously, I had served in student ministry in Brazil and as a church planter among an unreached people group in Central Asia.

In the early stages of my doctoral studies, searching for a dissertation topic related to my seminary responsibilities, I discovered the World Evangelical Fellowship's study of missionary attrition, *Too Valuable to Lose*. While that study caught my attention and crystallized my thinking on the subject of attrition, I was struck as well by the impression that mission executives, on whose input the study was based, were missing the full



significance that a lack of crosscultural training played in the problem of attrition.

With the problem of attrition in mind, I decided to explore what could be done to improve the crosscultural training that mission candidates receive before leaving for the field, seeing this as one important way to address the problem. Moreover, my foremost interest in research was to hear primarily from the missionaries, who are those most affected by the issues but who seemed in the literature to have by far the weakest voice in the discussion.

In 2000, Brazilian Baptists invited me to participate in a work group of denominational leaders planning a new mission training center. When the center was launched in 2002 in Rio de Janeiro, I became coordinator of the biblical/ theological studies area. We have an international group of coordinators, natives of Brazil, Chile, and the United States, serving under the leadership of a Brazilian director. Through working agreements with the home and world mission boards of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, we have already one of the largest student bodies of any mission training center in Latin America. While we are part of the Brazilian Baptist mission endeavor, we recognize the need for cooperation in mission with other groups. With the exception of one very small training center in the rural mountains, ours is the only mission training center in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Our commitment is to be a center that serves the wider evangelical community. This study is written bearing in mind the candidates for mission who will pass through our training center, and other similar programs, in the years to come. The church, and those charged with training these candidates, hold a sacred obligation to give the best that

we have to the candidates and the Lord they seek to serve.

### Brazil and the World Mission Movement

We stand at the beginning of a new millennium, one in which we can expect to see God work in new ways through God's Church to accomplish the task of world evangelization. A primary reason for the emergence of new paradigms is that the world evangelical population has shifted dramatically in the past century. In 1900, at the end of the "Great Century" of Protestant missionary advance, 10 percent of all evangelical Christians in the world were non-Westerners; by 1985, fully 66 percent were non-Westerners (Pate 1991b:28). Using a different reference point—the total of all Christians, not just evangelicals—David Barrett and Todd Johnson highlight the growth of the church outside the West by pointing out that in A.D. 2000, 58 percent of all Christians were from what they termed the Third World (Barrett and Johnson 2001:71).

Along with this numerical growth, the last few decades have seen a commensurate surge in the mission activity of Two-Thirds World Christians. While mission outreach has been a part of the life of many younger churches since their inception, what we are witnessing now is nothing less than the dramatic shifting of the mantle of leadership in world evangelization from the shoulders of the church in the West to a shared partnership with the church in the Two-Thirds World.

The growth of evangelical missions in the Two-Thirds World has been phenomenal. Between 1972 and 1988, three surveys revealed the pace of that growth. In 1972, there were at least 210 sending agencies in the Two-Thirds World,



representing some 3,404 missionaries. Less than a decade later, in 1980, there were 743 sending agencies and about 13,000 or more missionaries from these newer sending countries. By 1988, the number of sending agencies had grown to 1,094, and the number of non-Western missionaries grew to at least 35,924 serving in 188 countries among 2,425 people groups. According to projections, at the 13.29 percent annual and 248 percent decadal growth rate that these figures represent for the 1980s, the total number of Two-Thirds World missionaries would reach over 164,000 by the year 2000, surpassing the number of Western missionaries by more than 32,000 (Keyes and Pate 1993:190; see Pate 1991a).

According to information available to World Vision's Missions Advanced Research Center (MARC), no current surveys have been made to keep track of whether or not these projections have been born out (Siewert 1998). Furthermore, "missionary" may be defined and reported differently in different settings around the world, making comparison of data difficult. Nevertheless, the emerging pattern is clear. The Two-Thirds World church is setting its hand to the task of world mission in ever-increasing numbers.

Without diminishing in any way the significance of the mission movement from the Two-Thirds World, it should be recognized that many of those crosscultural missionaries work with other ethnic and cultural groups without leaving their country of origin. According to Patrick Johnstone's figures from *Operation World: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, traditional sending countries still send the majority of missionaries who serve in other countries. Out of a total of 97,732 missionaries serving outside

their country in 2001, there were 22,007 who came from Africa, Asia, Europe (minus missionaries from what might be considered the traditional Protestant sending countries), Latin America, and the Pacific (minus missionaries from Australia and New Zealand) (Johnstone 2001:747-752).

Brazil is poised to play a significant role in the contribution of the Two-Thirds World churches to the task of world evangelization. The largest nation in Latin America, comprising half the South American land mass and with the sixth largest population in the world, Brazil has seen an explosion of evangelical church growth since the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries a little over one hundred years ago. As in the case of other leading Two-Thirds World churches, Brazilian evangelicals are assuming a greater role in world mission. In the period 1972-1988, the number of Brazilian mission agencies increased from 26 to 57, while the number of missionaries officially reported grew from 495 to 1167. The estimated numbers for that same time period in this survey, which go beyond the officially reported statistics, are 595 missionaries in 1972 and 2040 in 1988. These estimated numbers, if accurate, would place Brazil as the sixth largest new sending country (Pate 1991b:31-32).

In fact, the estimated numbers may have been somewhat high. Ted Limpic (1997:144) reports that the number of Brazilian crosscultural missionaries, both inside and outside Brazil, jumped from 880 in 1989 to 1,764 in 1995. This 9% annual growth rate in missionary numbers is especially encouraging when we stop to remember that for most of this period, the Brazilian economy suffered from a *monthly*

inflation rate of 25 percent or more.

The story in the last couple of years demonstrates the continuing strength and growth of the Brazilian mission movement. According to the information available to COMIBAM, the evangelical Latin American missions fellowship, in 1998 there were 93 international boards and agencies located in Brazil, sending out 2,158 Brazilian crosscultural missionaries (COMIBAM Web site, October 1998). In the year 2000, the Brazilian Association of Crosscultural Missions (AMTB) and SEPAL identified only 59 Brazilian agencies with active workers on the field, perhaps revealing not a shrinkage in the movement, but rather the fact that many agencies are very new and small, and some organizations may exist on paper only. Also in 2000, the AMTB and SEPAL identified 2278 Brazilian crosscultural missionaries (Limpic 2000:55). By 2002, COMIBAM and Ted Limpic of SEPAL reported that the number of Brazilian crosscultural missionaries had expanded to 2803 (COMIBAM Web site, December 2004). The movement has grown to the point that even secular Brazilians are taking note. The leading Brazilian weekly news magazine *Veja*, in its edition of 14 April 1997, reported, "In whatever country where you might step today, there is a good chance there will be a Brazilian there. Brazilian missionaries are spreading throughout the world to diffuse Christianity" (quoted in Adiwardana 1997a:3).

While the majority of these missionaries still serve in other Latin American countries, 35 percent serve outside Latin America, and 13 percent in the 10/40 Window (COMIBAM Web site, October 1998). This includes more than 70 countries on every continent. Margaretha Adiwardana notes that in the years 1995-1997, half or



more of Brazilian missionary candidates envision service in a Muslim country (1997a:3). The relatively new Brazilian focus on the mission frontiers of the unreached world represents a response to the movement of the Spirit of God, and bears the potential to become a key factor in world evangelization as we move further into this new century.

Despite the legitimate cause for rejoicing in what God is doing in Brazil and in other Two-Thirds World mission-sending countries, this great growth has not occurred without problems. There are significant issues that must be addressed. Brazilian missiologist Neuza Itioka looks at the “other side” of the growth and success of the missionary movement in Brazil. As one type of example, she tells of a committed Christian young woman sent as a missionary, only to become emotionally involved with a married national, leave the mission and marry him. There is also a reported problem with a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of some Brazilian missionaries. Itioka writes that in conversations with national church leaders in a European country, she discovered that Brazilian missionaries have arrived with a superficial triumphalism, and in a childish enthusiasm tried to reproduce a Brazilian type of ministry in a country whose culture is very different than that of Brazil. Some single female missionaries reportedly have shocked and scandalized people in their host countries with their Brazilian-style dating patterns (1993:45-46).

These problems are significant enough to raise the possibility in the minds of some Brazilian missions leaders that in some places, the doors for a missionary presence may be closed to all Brazilians because of the insensitivity and

ethnocentrism that some of them demonstrate (1993:47). In another publication, Itioka relates the story of a letter she received from a friend, another Brazilian missionary. This friend had written sharing her own deep concern that Brazilian missionaries were becoming a curse in her host country because of their lack of respect for the nationals, and their insistence on doing things their way. The missionary was convinced that these things were going on because of a lack of training and because of spiritual immaturity. She concluded her letter to Itioka with the warning, “If this kind of thing continues, the doors of this country will be closed to Brazilian missionaries” (1991:112).

Obviously, a few anecdotal stories do not constitute clear evidence for what might be considered an alarmist overreaction. To use a folk analogy, other stories from Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders related during the course of my research, both during and outside the context of research interviews, are enough to indicate that there is some smoke, but not necessarily a four-alarm fire. At the least, there is reason for legitimate concern that Brazilian missionaries need to demonstrate more crosscultural sensitivity. Itioka’s warning highlights the need for holistic training that is grounded in a profound sensitivity to cultural context.

This study makes the case that missionary preparation involves more than technical expertise in theology, cultural studies, or areas of ministry responsibility. It also involves preparing missionaries as spiritually and emotionally mature persons. Character and spiritual maturity issues can and must be addressed by adequate missionary preparation (Limpic 1997:149-150), grounded in an awareness of how

cultural factors influence these issues. Without this kind of training, the warning of Neuza Itioka's friend that Brazilian missionaries could wear out their welcome will remain as a threat to the health of the Brazilian mission movement.

Of course, Itioka is not alone in sounding the call for more effective missionary training. Larry Pate, after describing the numerical explosion of Two-Thirds World missions as cited above, laments the fact that many of these missionaries are sent to their fields of service without ever having received any meaningful training at all. The great growth in the number of missionaries has stimulated an accompanying need for adequate missionary training. He states categorically that missionary training should be at the top of the priority list for mission agencies, both from the West and from the Two-Thirds World (Pate 1991b:37). William Taylor minces no words about the problem when he writes, "The missions movement today in Latin America is characterized by an excess of emotion, a scarcity of theology, and limited serious thought about the price to be paid for long term, effective missionary service" (1991a:122). Of the Latin American crosscultural missionaries, which include Brazilians, Taylor speculates that less than 10 percent would have had any serious pre-field training for their ministries. He claims that "every Latin American mission leader shares the deep concern that one of the continent's serious missions weaknesses is the absence of adequate cross-cultural training" (1991a:122). Thinking of the Two-Thirds World in general, Raymond Windsor agrees. He writes, "In the light of the thousands joining the new missionary movement, training has now become the priority issue" (Windsor 1991:14).



Others might argue that other needs, such as finances, a better selection process, or clear goals and objectives to guide missionaries in their work, are greater priorities than training. But there cannot be an either/or mentality, forcing a choice between one priority or another. In the face of non-existent or woefully inadequate training for mission candidates, it is incumbent upon the church to address the need.

Responding to the need for adequate training will necessitate a willingness to look beyond traditional ways of training new missionaries. Traditional, Western-style seminary training, with its emphasis on academic performance, will not meet the needs of all who are responding to God's missionary call in their lives. Lois McKinney writes, "Traditional ways of educating missionaries are not enough. If the thousands of cross-cultural workers who need training are ever to be trained, new directions in missionary education must be found" (1991:241).

These new directions must be worked out within the context of each sending country and mission agency. David Harley tells the story of visiting an Asian country where many young people felt called to missions. A pastor asked Harley to help him set up a training program for them. While Harley agreed that there was an urgent need for a missionary training program, he was unable to meet the pastor's request. Harley knew how to set up a program that would be appropriate for Great Britain, and he had seen enough of training programs around the world to know what core subjects needed to be included everywhere. He was aware, however, "that it is not possible or even appropriate to transfer a curriculum from one country to another, let alone from one continent to another" (Harley 1995:69). The kind of preparation that is needed is



influenced by a number of factors, including the home cultural context of the sending agency or church and that of the training institution, as well as “the theological perspectives of the sending churches and the type of ministry for which students are being trained” (1995:69-70).

The churches, sending agencies and training institutions in Brazil need to develop training programs that are contextualized to Brazilian realities in order best to prepare those whom God is calling to overseas mission service. We should recognize that the cultural diversity of Brazil, and the practical and theological diversity of the church, necessitate significant diversity in the specific preparation strategies that must be developed. The focus here, then, is not to propose a cookie-cutter model of courses and teaching plans to be replicated throughout Brazil. Rather, the model proposed in this dissertation represents a commitment to certain values and to a contextualized approach to training that, accordingly, leaves many issues in the hands of local leadership. It is my conviction that when leaders of a training center know the needs of their constituency, possess a solid foundation in missiological studies and practical field experience, and have bought into an overall philosophy, they are the ones best qualified to deal with specific details.

### Missiological Assumptions

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ provides us with our basic model for ministry and mission. This is my foundational missiological assumption, informed by, among other passages, the Johanne form of the Great Commission: “As the Father has sent

me, even so I send you” (John 20:21). That the Incarnation presents a normative example for us is also a primary focus of the incarnational kenosis passage in Philippians 2:5-11, which begins with the admonishment that we are to “Have this mind in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

In that passage, it is clear that imitating the mind of Christ involves a willingness to empty ourselves of that which we might consider to be our natural identity and privileges in order to accomplish that to which God calls us. Jesus not only emptied himself, but identified with us as human beings, as we are to identify with those to whom God calls us. Furthermore, Jesus humbled himself, even to the point of death on a cross. While that ultimate sacrifice will be asked of some missionaries, all are called to a life of humility, arriving among their people with a learner’s spirit. It is in that way that we can point people authentically to Jesus, that they may know and confess him as Lord.

In the Incarnation, we see in Jesus a process of identification with human beings that is radical and total. It involved his complete immersion in the Jewish culture of his day. Jesus was able to communicate as a cultural insider, understanding the worldview and thought patterns of the people. This was central to his capacity to communicate so effectively the good news of the kingdom. As Jesus taught, proclaimed and lived the kingdom, he demonstrated clearly that mission is holistic. Jesus provided for salvation in the totality of humanity’s needs in a seamless fabric that encompassed the emotional, physical, social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual.

The practice of mission, if it is to be modeled on the example of Jesus, will also be characterized by a radical identification with the people God has called us to serve. For those involved in mission, it will involve relinquishing what we consider to be our rights and privileges, as well as our cultural compulsives, in order to know and love the people, and to build intimacy and understanding between us and them. Our mission also will be holistic, seeking to share the good news of a God who is concerned with both our immediate, intimate issues and our ultimate needs as well. As Louis Luzbetak puts it, “Mission consists in incarnating Christ in the given time and place, allowing him to be reborn in the given lifeway” (1988:133).

I believe that this guiding theological orientation is applicable in a practical sense to informing the kind of training needed for crosscultural mission. Just as our receptors on the mission field need to hear the gospel in a way that is culturally relevant and not tied to foreign forms through our incarnational witness, those whom we are training for mission service need to receive their training for mission in a form that meets their needs in their own context. A commitment to cultural sensitivity in the training of new missionaries will have at least two advantages. First, it will do a better job of preparing the new missionaries because the training will be geared to their specific needs and ways of learning. Secondly, intentional cultural sensitivity to the learning styles and training needs of missionary candidates will provide a model of contextualization that these new missionaries can follow on the field. In the process, it will start them on the journey of self-discovery that is so necessary in becoming a bicultural person.

Finally, we should note that just as Jesus used a holistic approach in ministering to the needs of the people, he also took a holistic approach to the training of the twelve. These disciples learned from Jesus through his preaching and teaching ministry (a formal component). Jesus sent them out on mission, providing a practical, non-formal component. And he also trained the disciples through sharing his life in community with them, an informal component of their training that may have been the most important of all.

The structure of mission encompasses what Winter calls modalities and sodalities; this is a second missiological assumption (Winter 1992: B45-57). Modalities is a term denoting the church as it engages in the missionary task. The church is central to the plan and purpose of God for the world of bringing all things together under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:10-11). The responsibility for mission belongs to the church as a whole (2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 2 Peter 2:9-10). “The Church is the body of Christ, the community of the Holy Spirit, the people of God. It is the community of the King, and the agent in the world of God’s plan for the reconciliation of all things” (Snyder 1992: A134-143).

Scripture also contains the model of Paul’s missionary band in Acts as a prototype of the mission sodalities, or groups of workers with a particular calling and commitment to the mission task (Winter 1992: B46-47). Mission teams and mission agencies might be seen as carrying on a similar function today. Mission today, as always, involves a vital partnership between the church and the various sodalities that are devoted to the task of mission. Therefore, the church has an important role to play



in calling, preparing and supporting those called to crosscultural mission. The values and commitments of sodalities, such as training centers, are to reflect the life, values, commitments, and missionary calling of the church.

Christian mission consists of proclaiming the unchanging message of the living Christ, crucified and resurrected, in diverse human cultures. Therefore, effective mission involves understanding both our text (the biblical message), and the context (the specific human culture in which we minister). This is a third missiological assumption.

One implication of this foundational assumption is that it is important for Christians to engage in the theological task on the local level. Doing so consciously in their own context prepares missionaries to help new churches develop their own local theologies. Sebastião Lúcio Guimarães, director of the Evangelical Missions Center in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, points to this truth and the need to pay more attention to developing authentically Latin American theologies when he writes, “The Evangelical leadership needs to approach the subjects of theology and missiology in the light of their own culture, experiences, problems, challenges, values, and realities, in order to be able to go to other cultures with the good news of salvation” (1997:68).

### Statement of the Problem

Most studies contain a theoretical framework, a lens through which to analyze data. In some ways the Burnett model, which is used as a framework for organizing

my study of Brazilian culture in Chapter 3, serves that purpose. Because, “In qualitative research the use of theory is less clear than in quantitative designs” (Creswell 1994:93), and given the nature of my study, it is prudent to use a grounded theory approach to confirm insights I tentatively held at the outset. In such a qualitative approach, “The researcher begins by gathering detailed information and forms categories or themes until a theory or pattern emerges” (1994:93). This is the procedure used throughout this research. Since “A qualitative study can be evaluated accurately only if its procedures are sufficiently explicit so the readers of the resulting publication can assess their appropriateness” (Strauss and Corbin 1990:249), the procedures followed during the course of the study are set forward in reporting findings at each stage of the process.

The reality I address in this research is the following: For all its potential, the Brazilian mission movement has a problem. Too many missionaries are leaving the field early, and too many who stay make mistakes serious enough to hamper their long-term effectiveness. With this basic reality as a background, the research question that drives this study is: How can those who prepare missionary candidates in Brazil shape the training experience in a way that is informed by and geared toward the formational cultural characteristics and needs of Brazilian candidates?

Understanding and responding to the problem requires a study that takes into account a series of issues. These issues suggest the data collecting, analytical, and interpretive imperatives that characterize the research process. The issues can be expressed in the form of four questions:

1. What does the recent literature on missionary training, and in fields related to the subject, have to teach us about the role that an adequate program can play in reducing attrition and increasing long-term cultural integration? The kind of data to be collected in this literature research will explore the connection between a lack of adequate preparation and the problem of attrition, the philosophical underpinnings of training for crosscultural mission, the importance of cultural sensitivity in training missionary candidates, and various factors to be considered in organizing a training program. The findings of this study will be used to direct the research on Brazilian culture in a way that is relevant to this research project, to help interpret and evaluate the data collected from field interviews, and to build theoretical sensitivity, serving as a background for proposals that are made for training in the Brazilian context.
2. What can we learn from the vast literature on Brazilian culture that, informed by and sifted through the grid of the literature on missionary preparation, can help us understand how elements of Brazilianness present us with important considerations to be taken into account in assessing the training needs of Brazilian mission candidates? The kind of data collected in this literature research will be used to explore features of Brazilian culture that are relevant to understanding the cultural context as it pertains to missionary training issues. The findings of this study will be used to build the kind of theoretical sensitivity needed to understand, interpret, and organize the interview research data.
3. What can Brazilian missionaries, with additional input from Brazilian mission executives and missionary trainers, tell us about their experiences that will shed



further light on training needs for Brazilian mission candidates? This part of the research demands collection of interview data from Brazilian missionaries, supplemented by interviews with mission agency executives and missionary trainers. This data will be used interactively in a constant comparative method, together with data gleaned from literature research, to identify common themes and categories relevant to missionary training in the Brazilian context that emerge from an analysis of the data.

4. Given all that has been learned from the literature on missionary preparation and on Brazilian culture, and in light of the input from those most involved in the Brazilian mission movement, what are the parameters that define a contextualized approach to Brazilian missionary training? This stage of the research process involves a reflection on lessons learned in the process of collecting and analyzing research data. On the basis of this research process, a model for contextualized Brazilian missionary training will emerge that, if followed, can be expected to greatly diminish problems of attrition and enhance the missionaries' sense of fulfillment in ministry.

### Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. The first reason this study is important is that it represents the first serious and systematic attempt to analyze Brazilian culture with a goal of contextualizing Brazilian mission training to the realities of Brazilian culture. There is no comprehensive literature on the subject; no

one to whom I talked has heard of anyone who is doing it; and one educator from a leading training center, active on the national level in the Brazilian Association of Missions Professors, told me no one had ever thought of it, but that it needed to be discussed on the national level. This study, then, suggests a new direction for thinking about mission training in Brazil.

The second reason this study is important is that, while the original concern that led me to begin the study focused on the training needs of those Brazilian missionaries going to serve in pioneer fields, the model that emerged out of the study is relevant for a broader range of Brazilian mission candidates. While the research focus on interviewing missionaries from pioneer fields may have had the advantage of putting some pertinent issues in more stark relief, this model can be useful in the hands of trainers concerned with the training needs of all Brazilian mission candidates.

The third reason this study is important is that it offers a model of research and application that can be useful to other mission trainers in other cultural contexts outside Brazil.

A fourth reason this study is important is that its application will send a message affirming Brazilian culture to Brazilian mission candidates. This in itself is an important message to send, for reasons that will become more apparent through the course of this study. Going further, it is possible also that learning a critical appreciation of their own culture will serve as a model to Brazilians so that hopefully,

as missionaries, they will be able similarly to value the culture of those to whom they go.

A fifth reason this study is important is that God has been at work among the church in Brazil, helping Brazilian Christians to lift up their eyes and see the fields beyond their own borders in need of the gospel. Failure to bring the best of our understanding and resources to help them prepare for the task of crosscultural mission would be unfaithful to those who go in obedience, and to the God who today is calling the Brazilian church to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

### Methodology

I used a qualitative research design for this project. I began with library research, in both English and Portuguese, on missionary training and related disciplines. My goal in this phase was to learn what work has already been done in the field, and to discover how the work of others could inform my own approach to the subject of missionary training.

My next step was to do library research, again in English and Portuguese, on Brazilian culture. My desire in this stage of research was to arrive at a deep understanding of Brazilianness, going beyond what one could discover by simply living and working in the culture, observing, and having casual conversation with Brazilian friends. While some aspects of Brazilian culture stand out, others are hidden far deeper than the casual observer can see. Still other aspects appear to be one thing on the surface, but carry deeper hidden meanings. Throughout the process,

I was looking for connections between Brazilian culture, on the one hand, and the task of preparing Brazilian missionaries, on the other.

The capacity to be able to do this was predicated on years of missionary service during which I have endeavored to maintain a high degree of commitment to identification and incarnational ministry, and more recently on my being accepted as a part of the Brazilian missiological community. I have been a missionary in Brazil for the better part of sixteen years, interrupted by a stay of almost three years outside of Brazil, during which I was a missionary with an unreached people group in Central Asia. I have been a member of the Brazilian Association of Missions Professors since 1997. Through my involvement and participant observation at different mission events, including two major mission conferences, I have become aware of issues of concern to Brazilian colleagues, and of other issues that have caught my personal attention as well. Another factor that refined my perceptions was the prior research I had done on global issues in missionary training, the first step in the research process.

The next step, concurrent with my library research on Brazilian culture, was to discover what missionaries had to say that would afford me another set of insights into the cultural and institutional factors involved in being a Brazilian missionary. I designed an interview schedule and, over a period of five years, interviewed twenty-six Brazilians who serve as missionaries on pioneer fields. To supplement the perspectives gained from interviews with the missionaries, I conducted an additional thirteen interviews with Brazilian mission executives and missionary trainers, with a separate interview schedule for each category. These interview schedules are



included as appendices at the end of the study.

Many quotations taken from interview responses are organized in tables that appear throughout Chapter 4 and in the appendices. Because every respondent was promised anonymity in order to encourage their candor as well as their participation, and recognizing the fact that security on the field was a very real concern for a number of participants, quotations are not publicly linked to the respondents' identity. However, researchers able to work in Portuguese could find these quotes and other information in a version of the fieldnotes from which indications of identity have been expunged.

Finally, through reflection on and analysis of the various kinds of data I collected, I created the model presented in Chapter 5. I then brought the data to the model, in order to draw specific conclusions on ways in which missionary training can be contextualized for Brazil.

### Preliminary Definitions

There are a number of terms which are used throughout this research and require a clear understanding of how they are used in these pages. This section contains a list of those terms, along with an explanation of their meaning here.

#### Holistic Missionary Preparation

One concept used in this research is that of holistic missionary preparation. Holistic training treats the broad range of missionary candidates' needs in getting ready to serve crossculturally. This means, for example, that teaching a missionary



candidate one set of skills is not enough. It is not enough to assume that if missionaries have a solid base of theological training so that they know the message with which they are entrusted, that is sufficient training; or, in the case of missionaries going out to use secular skills such as medicine or agriculture in their work, training in the area of their expertise plus a smattering of biblical training may be considered adequate. An understanding of holistic preparation informs us that missionaries must be developed not only in terms of expertise in the technical area of their job assignments, but must grow in other aspects as well. These would include development of a strong personal spiritual character, dealing constructively with any unresolved personal traumas or weaknesses, developing an understanding of culture and its importance in the missionary task, readiness for language learning, demonstrating the capacity to develop healthy relationships, developing an overall biblical perspective on mission, and evidencing an established capacity for effective ministry. Holistic training is at once academic, practical, spiritual, and personal in nature.

#### Formal, Non-formal, and Informal Preparation

Another concept that helps us to comprehend what is involved in missionary preparation is an understanding of the *formal*, *non-formal*, and *informal* aspects of preparation (Taylor 1991b:6-9). *Formal* preparation refers to the highly structured approach of traditional classroom academic learning. It is usually theoretical in nature, and geared toward academic standards of evaluation. *Non-formal* learning is planned but not classroom-based, geared toward learning in the field by experience.

Evaluation is based on demonstrated capacity for ministry. *Informal* education refers to the serendipitous learning that comes as the non-structured result of living in a community of learners who stimulate and share with one another.

### Brazilian Culture

A third concept used repeatedly is that of Brazilian culture. It is not my purpose in this research simply to describe Brazilian culture in detail. The study of Brazilian culture here has a specific point of focus. My goal is to capture for the reader a sense of the essence of Brazilianness, and in the process to identify how certain aspects of the national character and experience relate to Brazilians' participation in pioneer missions.

### Delimitations

A major element of missionary preparation is training people for language learning. This research includes this component in terms of emphasizing the importance of language for the purposes of identification and of learning the host culture. However, it does not deal with the linguistic techniques utilized in teaching and learning languages.

There are many Brazilian cultural factors that influence missionary effectiveness, either positively or negatively. This study does not claim to treat them all. Through an examination of the literature available in both the United States and in Brazil, an attempt is made to identify the most relevant features in Brazilian culture that bear on the question of missionary effectiveness, corroborated and supplemented

by the input of Brazilian missionaries and leaders in the Brazilian missions movement.

The shortage of qualified missionary trainers who have both extensive experience on the field and special preparation to teach candidates is a pressing issue that affects both the general availability and the overall quality of missionary training in Brazil. The steps needed to correct this shortage will not, however, be a focus of this research.

The local church plays an important role in missionary preparation as the locus of character development and spiritual formation, and as the primary avenue for developing experiences in ministry. These processes are assumed but not treated in this study. The focus of this research is on missionary preparation in a recognized program of ministry formation, prior to departure for a field assignment. Neither does it include field orientation, which is also a vital part of missionary training but which lies outside the scope of this research.

This research identifies an element of mutual frustration, and even conflict, that sometimes enters into the relationship between missionaries and mission agency executives. While this phenomenon is in no way exclusive to Brazil, this research explores possible factors within Brazilian culture that help us understand some of the particular dynamics of the relationship in a Brazilian context. However, understanding the context of specific institutional cultures within which agency executives must work, while a relevant issue, is not a focus of this research.

### Organization of the Study

This study is organized in four stages, corresponding to the four imperatives identified earlier in this chapter in the Statement of the Problem section. Chapter 2 consists of a report on the research of the literature on missionary training and related subjects to discover what others have found out about how training can help missionaries not only stay on the field, but be productive and fulfilled in their ministries. Building on that base, Chapter 3 reports on research of the literature on Brazilian culture, with a particular focus on what in the culture seems to be most significant for training mission candidates in a contextualized way. Chapter 4 reports on the results of interview research with Brazilian missionaries who have been serving in a pioneer field. These interviews are supplemented by a series of interviews with Brazilian missionary trainers and mission agency executives, in order to provide added depth and perspective. Chapter 5 contains a report on what was learned through the research process, and proposes a training model for mission candidates. The presentation of the model uses what has been learned about Brazilian culture and Brazilian characteristics in making suggestions for how to contextualize the training experience to meet the needs of Brazilian mission candidates. The study concludes with a series of missiological implications of the research project and suggestions for further study.

### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter began with some autobiographical remarks in an effort to shed light on the reasons for interest in this study. It traced the development of the Brazilian



evangelical mission movement and the promise that movement holds for making a significant contribution to the mission of the global church. The chapter identified the missiological assumptions that inform this study, stated the questions to be researched, defined the significance of the study, described the methodology used in the research, defined terms, placed delimitations on the study, and outlined the organization of the study.



## Chapter 2

### Missionary Training in a Time of Transition

#### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter will present an overview of recent literature on missionary preparation, together with related topics that are relevant to the subject of contextualized training for Brazilian missionaries. First, it presents an overview of missionary training and its relation to the rise of the mission movement in many of the younger churches. Second, it explores how the lack of effective preparation is linked to the problem of missionary attrition, with a particular focus on the major problem of attrition in the Brazilian missionary force. Third, it looks at the philosophical underpinnings of effective training for service in crosscultural mission. Fourth, it considers the importance of sensitivity to cultural context in missionary preparation and some of the cultural characteristics of Brazilian missionaries that have been identified in missionary training literature. The chapter concludes with a consideration of factors that might be considered in organizing a training program.

#### Missionary Training and the Rise of the Mission Movement in the Younger Churches

The need for missionary training stands as one of the greatest challenges and most pressing needs of the Two-Thirds World missionary movement. With the explosion of Two-Thirds World missions and missionaries in the last couple of decades, we can discern the hand of God at work and glimpse what the future may hold. The vast

potential of Two-Thirds World missionaries to bring new perspectives and capabilities to the task of world evangelization is exhilarating to consider. Yet even as these younger churches begin to make their distinctive and significant contributions, critical issues have come to the attention of missiologists, including academics, mission agency leaders, and front-line missionary trainers. High on their list of priorities is more effective training for those crosscultural witnesses who are being sent in increasing numbers. “The rapid growth of the missionary movement in the Two-Thirds World has created a critical demand for adequate and appropriate missionary training. A number of Christian leaders in the Two-Thirds World have spoken of the urgency of the situation and the kind of training they feel is needed” (Harley 1995:5).

While there is not an extensive body of literature dealing with the subject of missionary preparation, significant work has been done on the subject over the last decade or more. Much of this has come about through the efforts and influence of the World Evangelical Fellowship and affiliated national evangelical groups. New ground is being broken as churches and mission leaders all over the world seek to address the need which the many new missionaries that they are sending have for effective training.

Paul Pierson reminds us of a reality that is so obvious that it could be overlooked easily. “The Western Protestant missionary movement, which started in the eighteenth century, with very rare exceptions assumed that Western theological and technological training were adequate preparation for cross-cultural missionary service” (1991:193). In retrospect it might seem obvious that, in light of the many mistakes made by Western missionaries in taking the gospel to other cultures, this assumption was not well-founded.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that the pioneers of the modern mission movement had to learn by doing, and that imperfection was as inevitable for them as it continues to be for us. Today, we have the benefits of hindsight and the opportunity to reflect on both the positive and negative experiences of the past as we consider the shape of mission preparation for the twenty-first century. The task of world evangelization is too important to continue to make unwarranted assumptions about missionary training, especially when history makes clear the negative consequences of doing so. It seems the time has come for critical appraisal and innovation in designing well-rounded programs of missionary preparation.

### Missionary Preparation and the Problem of Attrition

The issue of missionary attrition is of prime concern to many mission leaders around the world. This concern led to the design and implementation of the ReMAP project (Reducing Missionary Attrition Project), which was undertaken under the auspices of the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission. The project included the participation of many of the key sending countries around the world, including Brazil and other newer sending countries (Lewis 1997:77).

Concern has been very high in the Brazilian missions community over the issue of attrition since insufficiently researched rumors began spreading in the early 1990s that Brazilian missionaries were leaving the field in droves. The report was that out of 5,000 missionaries sent out, only 1,000 were on the field five years later. That is a 75% attrition rate, and works out to 15% attrition per year. This “chilling” report had the effect of



galvanizing the attention of Brazilian leaders to find out how many Brazilian missionaries are really leaving the field, and why (Limpic 1997:147).

Researchers subsequently discovered that the annual attrition rate for Brazilian missionaries is not 15% as was feared, but 7% (1997:148). That information came as a classic “good news/bad news” report. The good news was that Brazilian missionary attrition was not at the astronomical height that was feared; the bad news was that the 7% annual attrition rate is still almost 40% higher than the 5.1% worldwide attrition rate (Brierley 1997:86).

The ReMAP study focuses on the perceptions that mission agency leaders have of the reasons for the rate of attrition in their agencies (Lewis 1997:79). This raises questions about the accuracy of the perceptions being reported. The missionaries themselves are not heard from in this study, and their perspective on the reasons for attrition could be very different from that of their supervisors. The designers of the study recognize that limitation (Lewis 1997:79; Brierley 1997:89). This represents a major limitation, and indicates that we should not set any conclusions in concrete until a way is found to get significant, reliable input from the missionaries. Nevertheless, the study is of great value in at least giving us an initial picture of the issues at play.

One of the noteworthy outcomes of the study from my perspective is the low ranking given to cultural factors in the agency leaders’ perception of the reasons for missionary attrition. In a world-wide survey of these perceived reasons, cultural factors (presumably missionary appreciation of and capacity to adapt to the host culture) were considered least important among several possible factors listed (1997:89). It is



significant that in the other listed reasons for “preventable” attrition, all of which were ranked more relevant than cultural issues, the question of culture is integrally related to the specified issue. The other reasons for attrition, which were considered more important than cultural factors, were personal, marriage/family, society, work-related, and team issues. On close examination, issues of culture may be involved significantly in every one of these areas! For example, the stress of culture shock puts added pressure on marriage and family life. Cultural insensitivity can be a major factor in “work-related” problems. Different ways of relating to the local culture and to nationals can create tensions within team relationships. The examples of the role of culture in these other recognized attrition factors could go on and on. Yet many of these behind-the-scenes cultural issues go undetected by those who are not sensitive to them.

Recognizing the fallacy of separating issues of cultural adaptation from these other factors has crucial implications for the problem of attrition and designing missionary preparation methods for dealing with the relevant issues. If mission agency leaders fail to recognize the role of culture in all of these attrition issues that seem more relevant to them, then culture will never receive the attention it deserves in our missionary preparation programs. Right now in Brazil, ReMAP surveys indicate that only 50% of the sending agencies require any kind of crosscultural orientation (1997:101). The possible connection between high attrition and a lack of crosscultural training deserves attention.

One national leader who seems to have grasped the significance of this connection is Seth Anyomi of Ghana. Even though cultural reasons only occupy sixth place on the

chart listing reasons for missionary attrition in Ghana (1997:165-166), Anyomi points to cultural training as the number one need for reducing attrition in his country. He sees an “urgent need for cultural training as a way to forestall attrition and increase effectiveness in reaching the culturally diverse groups of Ghana” (1997:169).

In addition to being sensitive to the question of how cultural adaptation relates to other, sometimes more visible problems on the field, it may prove helpful also to look at these issues from the other end, from the perspective of the missionary’s native culture. Are there some cultural characteristics of marriage relationships and roles, how one works with others in a team, how one relates to authority, or other cultural characteristics of particular missionary sending countries that can help trainers anticipate and prepare for some typical underlying cultural stresses that missionaries from that particular culture might encounter on the field? For the purposes of this study, it would be helpful to look for some of those factors in Brazilian culture that might underlie some of the common problems Brazilian missionaries encounter on the field.

As we consider the problems of attrition and the ineffectiveness brought on by a lack of awareness of cultural issues, or of insensitivity to the host culture, it becomes apparent that there is a “hidden benefit” in gearing missionary training to the cultural realities of those being prepared to serve in mission, as this study advocates. The process of growing self-awareness inherent in identifying factors in the sending culture that influence training methods carries within it a model for cultural sensitivity that will encourage missionary candidates to reflect on cultural issues and to take them seriously. As missionaries on the field follow this model of cultural sensitivity which they

experienced during their training, the tendency will be for the cultural dynamics underlying many of the cited reasons for attrition to be dealt with in a positive fashion, thereby increasing missionary satisfaction and effectiveness, and decreasing rates of attrition.

While responses to the ReMAP study indicate that many Brazilian agency leaders do not appreciate the significance of culture and crosscultural training in addressing the attrition problem, some of the leaders in the ReMAP study in Brazil do. A discussion group on pre-field training reported,

Although in the report on attrition, the cross-cultural adaptation factor is not the most important reason for attrition (it ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the new sending countries), a suitable cross-cultural readiness prepared in pre-field training will help a lot in cultural adaptation. In turn, this reduces the stress on field and bolsters psychological strength. Adaptability also increases effectiveness in communicating the gospel in another culture. (Adiwardana 1997b:210)

The group went on to recommend that, (1) training in crosscultural adaptation should be perceived as an ongoing process, (2) training in crosscultural issues should seek to develop attitudes of openness and willingness to learn from and to identify with the people, (3) trainees should be prepared for crosscultural competency through a study of language-learning skills, cultural anthropology, and crosscultural communication skills, (4) trainees should be prepared culturally, mentally and spiritually through formal, non-formal and informal methods, and (5) training should be coordinated between the sending church, mission agencies, and the receiving church (1997b:210-211).

There is another reason for encouragement in considering the mission-sending environment in Brazil. While the statistic quoted above showing that only 50% of the Brazilian sending agencies require any kind of crosscultural orientation is alarming, and



seems to indicate a thorough disinterest on the part of agency leaders to consider the role of culture in effective missionary service, there is another side of the story. On a worldwide basis, inappropriate training ranks 17<sup>th</sup> overall among 26 reasons given for missionary attrition, but is ranked first in Brazil (1997b:207; Brierley 1997:94). This could very well mean that because Brazilian agency leaders see the need for increased training, they may be open to see the crucial component of culture for that training if enough trainers and educators could make a strong case for it.

Élban César alerts us to another danger leading to high missionary attrition in the Brazilian context. He sees some candidates moving toward crosscultural service out of desires to see the world, to run away from problems at home, and simply because mission has become fashionable right now (1993:41-43). While an academic approach to training might not catch this (and a complete lack of training certainly never would!), a holistic approach that incorporates non-formal and informal learning in a community setting, where plenty of attention is paid to discipleship, pastoral care, and relationship issues, would almost certainly bring to the trainer's attention issues like these with which we must deal.

Pastoral care may be the most neglected aspect of the missionary enterprise (Girón 1997:38). Missionaries suffering from many of the problems of attrition uncovered in the ReMAP research, such as family and marriage problems, would benefit from holistic training that concentrates on the whole person, and the whole missionary family as well. Pastoral care in the training stage can uncover and deal with personal and family issues that could cause problems on the field, issues which could never be addressed by a more



formal approach to training with a narrow focus on providing academic and professional qualifications. In this way, training programs that pay adequate attention to issues of character development and spiritual maturity can offer a great service in helping agencies do a better job of candidate selection, if the agencies are willing to consider the training centers as partners in the selection process. This is yet another reason for pursuing a well-conceived plan of missionary training.

Another attrition issue that has been identified is that “we put all of the training and investment in the individual up front” (McKaughan 1997:21). A series of short-term experiences before and/or during training that allow a person to see and experience mission work personally, and that provide sending agencies with opportunities for evaluation, can address this stewardship issue. The non-formal component of missionary training advocated above provides a perfect framework for doing so.

### A Philosophical Approach to Missionary Preparation

In light of what we know about Brazilian educational methods, and the realities of High/Low Context orientations and cognitive styles, we need to consider the question of a philosophical approach to missionary preparation. Ferris asserts that there are

three basic assumptions inherent in the (traditional) schooling approach to education. First, that information recall and mental skills development are the most important criteria for evaluating incoming students. Second, that education may be segmented into units of standard value which are transferable from school to school without sacrificing the integrity of the schooling experience. And third, that a principal objective of schooling at any level is to prepare the student to undertake additional schooling at the next higher level. (1991:237)

There is another alternative, one that is being widely advocated. At the international level of discussion, Taylor (1991b:6-9) proposes a concept of training that includes formal, non-formal, and informal elements. Ekström has endorsed this approach in the Brazilian setting (1997:24-25).

*Formal training* includes characteristics such as high structure and a classroom and lecture orientation. Formal training is ladder-graded, and it is primarily theoretical, degree-oriented and concerned with accreditation standards (Taylor 1991b:7). Its primary concern is to transmit content. Ekström notes that this approach is easiest for the professor, because it does not demand interaction with the students (1997:24).

*Non-formal training* features planned but non-classroom activity, guided and evaluated field trips, practicums and internships, and in-service training. It involves learning by doing, in context. The faculty assumes a discipleship and mentoring role with students. Graduation comes as a result of attaining ministry competency, not by passing academic courses (Taylor 1991b:7). Ekström adds that this type of training complements formal education, and that small groups are important to the way it works (1997:25).

*Informal education* “takes place in the dynamics of the learning community” (Taylor 1991b:7). It happens through the normal, everyday exchanges between students and professors and other students. Community life, family life, discipleship training, personal counseling and personal evaluations are all a part of this kind of training, which can be used effectively in developing spiritual maturity and character on the part of students (Ekström 1997:25-26). Informal training thus plays a vital role in the total picture of missionary preparation. Escobar (1996:105) notes that

forming people for mission is an activity that should take place within the frame of a 'person to person' relationship, which is as fundamental as the environment for the educational process. No amount of academic excellence or doctrinal orthodoxy can substitute for this personalized dimension of the training for mission.

Taylor advocates a combination of the three types of education in an integrated whole. *Formal education* would include a typical missions curriculum of biblical theology of missions, historical and cultural studies, and specialized studies focusing on the candidate's particular needs (i.e., work with university students, tentmaking in restricted access areas, etc.). *Non-formal* aspects could include practical courses in health, agriculture, etc.; family relationships in a cross-cultural setting; guided field trips; practicums and supervised experiences in ministry. The *informal* dynamic would permeate the community (Taylor 1991b:8-9). Taylor seems to reflect the opinion of a large body of mission educators when he writes, "Whatever is done, it [missionary preparation] must combine formal, non-formal and informal education. We cannot run the luxury of running academic, theoretical missiology centers" (1991a:129).

The values and priorities advocated in this approach to missionary training are consistent with the directions advocated in the larger theology community by the movement for renewal in theological education (see Ferris 1990). That movement has received fresh focus and impetus in the form of the Convergence Model of theological training developed by Flynn, Tjong and West. Their model is built on five core values. *Theologia* emphasizes the authority and inspiration of Scripture; *padeia* values the spiritual and moral formation that flows from knowing and doing; *ekklesia* promotes a holistic concept of the church as the body of Christ; *koinonia* focuses on the relationship



between believers; and *pneumatics* provides a framework by which the believer relates to God, the church, life and ministry through Spirit-filled living (2002:154-176; 196). The Convergence Model also advocates three core methodologies: Contextualization, Dynamic Communication, and *Praxis* (2002:176-188; 197).

The values and priorities promoted by this model are extremely relevant for missionary training as well. One observation is particularly relevant as we consider the subject of contextualizing missionary training for Brazil. The authors state, “There is no such thing as a universal way to do theological training right—it varies with the people that make up the Church and their place in space and time” (2002:137).

A methodology incorporating elements of formal, non-formal and informal education seems to me to be the practical complement of a holistic theoretical approach to missionary preparation, and also seems to be particularly suited for use in high-context cultural settings such as Brazil. Taylor helps us to see where this training methodology fits into the overall picture when he describes his core concept of “Integrated Missionary Training” (1991b:3-10). This concept is composed of the elements of personal disciplines, the local church, biblical/theological studies, crosscultural studies, pre-field equipping by the agency, and on-field career training. The integration of formal, non-formal and informal educational methods is utilized particularly in a period of biblical/theological and crosscultural studies that would be concluded prior to pre-field training by one’s agency.

As we consider the tremendous numbers of new crosscultural witnesses that God is calling out from the churches of the Two-Thirds World, it is obvious that traditional



seminaries are not equipped to handle the numbers of missionaries that must be trained. Not only that, but many feel that other methods of preparation will meet current needs more effectively. One reason is that seminaries in Brazil relegate missiological studies to the periphery of the curriculum (Guimarães 1997:75).

The “new directions” being explored today look beyond the model of the seminary, with its focus on academic aspects of preparation. Seminaries have borrowed heavily from what Charles Van Engen of Fuller Seminary calls the “university paradigm” in education. He evaluates this paradigm in the following way:

The university-based paradigm is strong in the area of knowing, especially knowledge of past thought, traditions, theologians, perspectives—and strong in cultivating creativity for developing new thought. It has shown itself to be rather weak, however, in terms of doing, which relates to ministry skills in the church. It is weakest in the area of being. The university environment has simply not proven itself to be very conducive to the long-term formation of personal spirituality and piety. Some of the weaknesses of the university paradigm seem to have hastened the move toward seminaries. (1996:244)

Even though the seminaries were formed as a reaction against some facets of the university paradigm, insofar as they have borrowed from that paradigm there remain weaknesses in forming students in the areas of doing and being. Since there is an overwhelming consensus in the recent literature that missionary training must be holistic, new models will involve either a revamping of the seminary model in order to address the areas of doing and being, or will develop entirely new initiatives. While the desire for holistic preparation is a common concern, different writers have their own ways of addressing the issue. To get a clear idea of what the concept involves, we need to take a look at several examples of what is being advocated.

The Africa Inland Church Missionary College of Kenya is one institution committed to holistic training. There they are concerned that students be prepared academically, practically, and spiritually (Harley 1995:14; c.f. Hildebrandt 1991). Andrew Swamidos of India's Yavatmal College for Leadership agrees, saying that "good missionary training must be 100% academic, 100% practical and 100% concerned with the development of the personal and spiritual life of the candidates" (1995:17). Writing on the basis of her experience teaching in Brazil, Barbara Burns focuses on missionary preparation from the spiritual, emotional and intellectual perspectives in order to address the problems of those Brazilian missionaries who are victims of attrition or who fail on the field because of personal moral failures or cultural insensitivity (1993:23-24).

Paul Pierson expresses the concept a little differently. He sees two broad, interrelated areas of missionary preparation, which he labels "training and experience" and "personal formation" (1991:195). More specifically, Pierson says that candidates should first be committed believers who demonstrate growing spiritual maturity. They should also have enough biblical training and understanding to be able to come to grips with the message of Scripture in the context where they serve. Thirdly, they need technical competence in their job assignment so that they will be equipped to enable the church to reach out and grow. Finally, they need to appreciate the necessity of the community life in Christ (1991:195).

Lois McKinney, who has years of experience in training missionaries in Brazil, stresses that it is not necessary to make forced choices "between spirituality and professionalization, servanthood and leadership, people orientation and task orientation or excellence in scholarship and excellence in ministry" (1991:241). For her, holistic

education involves preparing missionaries “spiritually, psychologically, theologically, culturally, missiologically and professionally” (1991:249-250).

Harley holds that missionary preparation attends to mental, emotional, spiritual, and practical needs, and that there needs to be a balance. He identifies the following components in holistic missionary training:

1. Developing spiritual character.
2. Learning to live with others in community. It is anticipated that a lot of mission work in the future will be done in the context of international teams. Training in community is a great place to work on character issues, and to get ready for the particular stresses that participation in an international team can bring.
3. Developing a personal perspective on mission.
4. Learning how to evangelize cross-culturally.
5. Developing ministry effectiveness. Communication skills are a primary focus here. These skills should be developed in the context of ministry. (Harley 1995:79)

Harley addresses the issue of personal spiritual maturity and continuing growth in his first point above. Brazilian mission agency executives and trainers agree wholeheartedly that this is a vital concern, and that it should receive priority in our training of missionary candidates. Indeed, one mistake that can be made too easily and too often is to assume too much of a candidate in this regard. However, when Harley writes that “[missionaries’] spiritual survival will depend not on the support of others, but on a deep fellowship with God” (1995:60), it is important to add an additional perspective. Harley’s comment evokes an image of a missionary as a hardy spiritual pioneer who has what it takes to go and make it on his or her own, an image that is rooted in concepts of Western individualism more than it is in the Word of God. In fact, biblically speaking, missionaries’ spiritual survival depends on *both* the support of others and their personal walk with God. The image of the missionary as an individualistic hero



of the faith is dangerous because it lays upon missionaries a level of expectation that God does not expect any of us to bear alone. It subtly distances the sending church from a sense of responsibility in forming an active support system for their missionaries. And, since the people back home know that they could not live up to the expectations being placed on their missionary, it fosters an unconscious assumption on the part of many if not most of them that God could not possibly call them to crosscultural mission. We also discern the assumption that the missionary cannot receive the spiritual support he or she needs from the new community of believers that develops in the receiving country. While it may well be reading too much into what Harley intended to say in the above quote, the fact is that this idea seems to reflect a dangerous popular stereotype rather than reality. The greatest tragedy of all would be for missionaries to accept the stereotype and play the expected role, in the process losing the freedom to be real people to either their home constituency or those in their host culture.

The basic concept of training running through these and other writers seems to be the necessity of preparing persons in their totality (Harley 1995:30). This emphasis is vitally important, because missionaries must function as whole people on their fields of service. Personal integrity, spiritual depth, professional competence and cultural sensitivity are all essential for effective missionary service.

For example, a missionary who has studied theology extensively but has no appreciation for or understanding of culture will be severely limited. At the same time, a missionary who is culturally sensitive but does not have an adequate biblical foundation, or who lacks Christian integrity in terms of personal moral standards, cannot be an effective witness to the gospel. Candidates who have great personal integrity and solid



biblical foundations may have unresolved emotional issues from past traumas that could become crippling when they are confronted with the added stress of life in another culture.

Those responsible for preparing and sending missionaries, then, must recognize an obligation under God to both the people to whom the missionaries go as Christ's representatives, and to the missionaries themselves, to prepare them for the full range of demands that their service will place upon them. Those who go out unprepared are much more likely to feel the frustrations brought on by unrealistic expectations, personal stresses they do not understand, or the lack of tools they need to understand and do their jobs effectively. These frustrations can easily lead to disillusionment and ineffectiveness or attrition. In regard to both missionary candidates and our receptors, Neuza Itioka of Brazil reminds us that sending churches must exhibit a servant spirit. In evaluating what needs to be done to provide adequate training, we should remember that "the lack of adequate preparation of a missionary signifies a lack of respect for the country and the culture to which we send them" (Itioka 1993:47; cf. Kane 1983).

The one thing that seems to be missing from some of these descriptions of holistic training is a clear statement of the importance of crosscultural training. McKinney specifically includes this in her description of holistic training, but other writers do not. To be sure, some of them may have it in mind when they speak of "practical preparation" or "learning how to evangelize crossculturally." But this language does not place enough value on learning how to understand culture on a broad basis, how to deal with culture shock, learning to identify incarnationally with a host people, or learning to theologize or make disciples across cultures.

This dimension of missionary preparation has so much to offer that it merits specific mention. This specific mention is important, because there are many who do not place a high priority on a strong crosscultural component in missionary training. Cultural anthropology offers us much more than an interesting tool that might be useful in crosscultural evangelism. It offers us a framework to understand not only the persons and societies to whom we go, but ourselves as well. “For missionaries, the greatest value of studying anthropology, for example, is not in what we learn about exotic cultures that are different from our own, but rather, in what we discover about ourselves” (Whiteman 1996:137).

J. Merle Davis was a missionary statesman ahead of his times in this regard.

Sixty years ago, he wrote the following:

An introduction to anthropology would give the missionary for the new age an invaluable understanding and appreciation of the people to whom he goes.... Social anthropology also guides in the task of integrating the Christian culture with the permanent values of the old way of life.

The missionary should be able to look upon the social and cultural environment as a storehouse of the treasures that a race has amassed in its struggle toward self-fulfillment. In this intricate pattern of life, God has spoken and has built. If the church in the foreign land is to endure, the missionary must face these life patterns reverently and try to discover those foundation stones in the *mores* of the people.... The slow progress of the church in many places, in part, has been due to the inability of Christ’s representatives to distinguish granite from rubble or to appreciate the suitability of letting the old framework assist in carrying the new structure. (1944:13)

The issue of holistic training is a connecting thread tying together a number of the most important questions in missionary preparation. Holistic training is vitally connected, for example, to questions of didactic methodology, curricula decisions, the type of schools we design, the length of our courses, student qualifications, accreditation,

the type of trainers needed, the need of missionary candidates for pastoral care, and the place of the local church in the preparation of missionaries. The model proposed in this study does not presume to dictate set solutions for all these issues, but it does delineate a philosophy and a set of practical commitments that will inform the thinking of leaders who will be making their decisions in context.

A commitment to holistic training is essential in Brazil because it allows us to address some of the important needs of our candidates, and because it will allow the Brazilian missionary force to “play to its strengths” in a way that traditional academically-oriented education does not. Holistic training, for example, is especially appropriate in a country where a rigorous Western-style academic background is available to only a few, or where many of the missionary candidates are first-generation converts with backgrounds in spiritism and other forms of harmful pre-Christian behavior that may have left behind a residue of unresolved personal and spiritual issues (Itioka 1991:113). Perhaps best of all, holistic preparation offers a new framework to rethink how we prepare men and women for Christian service that will encourage Brazilian leaders to critically evaluate past models of preparation and to design new strategies that are adapted to Brazilian realities.

### Sensitivity to Cultural Context in Missionary Preparation

Historically, there has been a tendency for at least some Brazilian evangelical groups to adopt uncritically North American and European forms of theological education. This tendency has influenced the way missiological education is done as well. In most cases, Brazilian mission education utilizes courses that have been developed in



other countries, but no patterns or methodologies have been set in concrete, because “Missiological education in Brazil is in a period of formation and development” (Ekström 1997:13). While it is fortunate that no entrenched patterns of foreign training have been irrevocably set, it remains true that “we have a long way to go before we arrive at a curricular base that totally corresponds to the needs of the young people we want to prepare for crosscultural mission” (1997:13).

This ought to tell us that the period through which we are passing right now, with large numbers of new mission volunteers needing to be trained and with the church, sending agencies, seminaries and training schools trying to decide how to respond to the need, is a critical period for setting the direction of Brazilian missionary preparation. The easy way out would be to adopt a generic approach that borrows indiscriminately from training methodologies originating in other cultures. To be sure, there is much to be learned from the experience of Christians in other lands, and we need to be alert to how we can apply what is being done to prepare missionaries in other countries to our own situation in Brazil. The key for Brazilian mission leaders is to use discernment. The goal, as alluded to by Ekström above, is to make sure that our methods correspond directly to the needs of the Brazilian young people we must train. In other words, our missionary training needs to be sensitive to the cultural context of our missionary candidates and churches. Mathias Zahniser, professor in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary specializing in world religions and crosscultural discipling, notes that “Christian disciplers need to adjust the discipling to the culture of the believers they are discipling” (Zahniser 1997:19). This important principle for crosscultural discipling in general is just as valid for the discipling



and preparation of missionary candidates.

James Pleuddemann reminds us that there are some “primary” characteristics of missionaries that hold true across cultures. These primary characteristics would include being born again, being committed to the truth of Scripture, being a person of prayer, and exhibiting biblical leadership criteria, among others. Thus, missionary training will have some similarities across cultures (Pleuddemann 1991:218). Whether one agrees with what is included or what is missing from his list, it would appear that at least some training ideas can be borrowed and adapted across cultures. However, “good missionary training would also have distinctives in each culture. Cultural values influence child-rearing practice, cognitive preferences, and pedagogical expectations about education. Cultural factors must be considered when preparing missionaries” (1991:218).

Ekström cites various Brazilian cultural factors affecting missionary training. Among them are a natural religiosity which is “a bridge of contact and identification with other peoples with a strong emphasis on spirituality;” “superstition,” which is related to religiosity; spiritual superficiality, due to the forced acceptance of Christianity on the part of indigenous tribes and African slaves, producing “Christians” on Sunday who continued to practice their old faiths in secret during the week; and superficiality, which produces a spiritual ambiguity in the lives of many missionary candidates (1997:16). He also highlights the characteristic of *malícia*, a term which literally is translated as *malice*, but which also carries the sense of subtlety or cunning. This can be used to try to take advantage of situations, and is so prevalent that it can permeate one’s mentality to the extent that it subverts Christian characteristics such as honesty, truthfulness and faithfulness. *Malícia* leads directly to one of the outstanding characteristics of Brazilian

culture, *jeitinho*, which refers to the Brazilian knack of finding creative, flexible solutions to almost any problem situation. This trait has obvious positive aspects, but also the potential negative of accommodation to dishonest aspects of culture.

Another cultural characteristic which Ekström sees as relevant to missionary training is fatalism. This is a strong element in the Brazilian worldview. It is seen in such common phrases as “*Se Deus quiser*” (If God wills). This may be a genuine expression of dependence on God, but also can be (and usually is) an expression of a refusal to assume responsibility (Ekström 1997:19). But rather than seeing this tendency in missionary candidates as a lack of character, it should be treated first as a product of custom that needs attention.

Emotionalism is a Latin characteristic that generates an initial enthusiasm for a cause such as mission, but which may undermine long-term perseverance in the face of difficulty (1997:19). Extroversion is a characteristic that gives Brazilians in general a facility in making contacts and expressing themselves in public. Other relevant characteristics include individualism, paternalism, ethnocentrism, and *machismo*. Many of these characteristics are present in other peoples also; the differences lie in the historical and cultural background (1997:20).

Barbara Burns, a missionary who serves as director of a missionary training center in northeastern Brazil, also has identified several issues in Brazilian culture that impact missionary effectiveness on the field and training needs at home. Some of these we have already encountered on Ekström’s list. Among the factors Burns (1987:62-96) cites which coincide with Ekström’s list are fatalism, as well as the concept and practice of *jeito* (the word for which *jeitinho*, explained above, is the diminutive).

Another factor she cites is individualism, which she believes often stifles successful teamwork, mutual help and solidarity. There is a strong element of truth to this, as anyone who follows some of the inner dynamics of the Brazilian soccer team at World Cup time can attest. Brazilian soccer puts great reliance on individual effort (Page 1995:401), which is consistent with the identified national characteristic. And while the individual brilliance of a Pelé, Romário, or Ronaldo can lift the national team to great heights, the desire for individual glory (and lucrative European contracts) can be a strong negative force for the team. This dynamic can be understood as an expression of an important cultural characteristic. A note of caution is called for, however. Often I have seen Brazilians working together cooperatively in groups. While there are times when this represents little more than enlightened self-interest, personal experience indicates that Brazilians can also participate well in groups, establishing genuine friendships, offering mutual support, and working together toward common goals.

Non-commitment is another of the factors which Burns treats. Brazilians, she suggests, have a tendency to start projects with a lot of enthusiasm but fail to carry them through (1987:73). Many Brazilians would acknowledge that there is some truth to this observation. One way we can deal with this tendency in missionary preparation would be to involve candidates in a series of crosscultural mission experiences, helping them to understand the realities of the mission field and become willing to make a long-term commitment on the basis of a personal knowledge of some of the difficulties involved in missionary service.

Authoritarianism in the form of paternalism is another cultural characteristic which Burns sees as having relevance for Brazilian missions. Paternalism is rooted in



Brazilian history in the person of the *patrão*, a wealthy power figure in Brazilian society. This cultural inheritance can affect Brazilian missions as individual missionaries seek position and dominating leadership, reinforcing the historical pattern of the *patrão* with some missionary models of the colonial period (Burns 1987:80). Racism, rhetoric (which Burns explains as an uninhibited, enthusiastic participation in public speech, conversation, or dialogue), spontaneity, sexual problems (i.e., sexual license), social responsibility (or the lack of it), and rationalization are other national characteristics which are also related to the subject of missionary preparation (1987:62-96).

Itioka is concerned that many missionaries come from dysfunctional backgrounds of broken homes, alcoholic parents, child abuse, incest, homosexuality, drugs, and spiritism. She notes, "In a country like Brazil it would be virtually impossible to select [as missionaries] only people without exposure to these problem areas" (1991:113).

Cultural realities such as these cannot be ignored in preparing missionaries for crosscultural service. It is imperative that trainers, educators and mission leaders exhibit awareness of their students' cultural backgrounds and how these issues impact their readiness for the field. "Overcoming negative and enhancing positive cultural traits are goals in missionary preparation" (Burns 1987:96).

Pleuddemann (1991:217-229) raises the issues of cognitive preferences and pedagogical expectations and styles as significant cultural factors in missionary preparation. The truth of the matter is that people from different cultures have tendencies to learn in different ways, and the best missionary training is designed to address needs in culture-specific ways (cf. Loong 1991, Raj 1991, Lee 1991, Fuller 1991, Hildebrandt



1991, Itioka 1991 and 1993, Taylor 1991a, Harley 1991, Mulholland 1991, Lewis 1991, Rickard 1991, and Sookhdeo 1991). It would be ironic indeed if those responsible for the training of crosscultural missionaries were to encourage their students to be sensitive to cultural issues in sharing the gospel, but were themselves blind to the cultural influences affecting their own candidates' training experience! As ideas for missionary training are shared across international boundaries, it is essential that we retain a sharp focus on the specific needs of missionaries who have been shaped by their own cultural and sub-cultural contexts.

Pleuddemann points out that students' experience in the educational system of their home culture and cultural factors influencing preferred learning styles should be important factors in shaping (but not determining) missionary preparation programs (1991:217-229, cf. 226). In looking at Brazil, we see an educational system that may work for some who have access to the best opportunities, but which leaves many behind. Some of the harshest criticisms of Brazilian education come from some of their most respected writers. Ekström cites Rubem Alves for the observation that Brazilian education makes students into wooden puppets, "Pinocchios" who lose their own will and identity (1997:24-25). He also cites (1997:24) Paulo Freire's familiar analogy from the book, *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*):

In place of communicating himself, the educator deposits messages that the students, mere incidentals, patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the "banking" system of education, in which the only area of activity offered to students is to receive the deposits, keep them and file them away (Freire, n.d.:66, my translation).

Burns echoes Freire's complaint. She describes the Brazilian classroom as "a place of blind acceptance, disinterest, and rote memory..., a necessary, if distasteful, step in the ladder of social acceptance and position" (1987:99). She points out the fact that an overwhelming teaching load is usually necessary for an educator's financial survival, a factor which does nothing to help them be creative, engaging teachers concerned for their students. She also characterizes Brazilian school as requiring no creative essays, no questioning of books and teachers, and little use of the library (1987:103).

There is a need for a balanced perspective here. The characterizations that Freire and Alves make, as well as Ekström and Burns, are certainly based on some harsh realities. The worst extremes of the problems would be located in the public school arena, which has a notorious reputation in Brazil and which parents of even very modest means try to avoid at all costs. The vast network of private schools would also exhibit the characteristics mentioned above, but in varying degrees. My own experience as the parent of two daughters who received some of their elementary education in North American public schools, but the majority of it in middle-class Brazilian private schools, is that their Brazilian educational experience has been better in most areas. There is ample evidence that Brazilian missionary candidates fortunate enough to have had access to decent education, and who have not wasted it by just "getting by" (another problem in even the good private schools), can be expected to exhibit significant academic capacities. In fact, the primary problem that the Brazilian educational system poses for missionary training, at least in my own experience, is the great disparity in academic foundations that our students bring to the training situation.

What significance do the factors mentioned above have for the preparation of Brazilian missionaries? For one thing, the tendency to make learning into a chore of rote memorization may inhibit the development of the capacity to reflect, analyze and respond in an appropriate manner to problems as they arise on the field. Developing that reflective and analytical capacity on the part of students represents a significant part of the task in missionary training. Burns asks,

What do Brazilian educational styles have to do with missions? Education for position; lack of practice in or value given to reflection, analysis, and induction; inability to arrive at general principles; and disinterest in practical application—will these tendencies affect missionary practice, or are they merely a North American concern because of cultural differences? (1987:103)

Furthermore, she believes that Brazilian educational methods will tend to produce missionary practice that is temporarily successful, but which in the long run proves to be empty and superficial (1987:103-104). Obviously, these are educational issues from within the Brazilian cultural context that merit the serious attention of those involved in missionary preparation.

Another cultural issue that has significant implications for missionary preparation is that of context. High context cultures are those in which people are involved deeply and intimately with each other, and in which information is widely shared. Low context cultures, on the other hand, are those highly individualized, fragmented cultures where there is little involvement with people (Hall 1977:38). While Hall's work has been highly influential in advancing the concept of context and revealing its importance in crosscultural studies, as shall be seen in Chapter 3 in specific regard to relational issues, Pleuddemann has applied the principle to the area of missionary training. In his view,



“Probably the most fundamental influence on culture and thinking is the degree of people’s sensitivity to their context” (1991:219). He notes that, “High-context people pay special attention to the world around them” (1991:219). They notice the details of their physical setting, including facial expressions, body language, names, and details about events. They pick up on subtle clues intuitively.

“Low-context people, on the other hand, pay special attention to words, ideas and concepts” (1991:220). Explicit words and ideas communicate more readily than implicit messages, such as tone of voice. They enjoy analyzing and comparing ideas. An example given of behavior differences between high- and low-context people is that the low-context manager will prefer a signed legal contract, while the high-context person will be satisfied with a high-context handshake, and even be insulted by having to sign a contract.

Most efforts at defining cultures on a sliding scale between the extremes of high- and low-context have focused on national cultures. However, “Recent research suggests that major cultural differences are not primarily differences between the Greek-oriented Western world and the non-Western world. Such differences in thinking stem equally from factors such as rural-urban, industrial-agricultural, or the amount of formal schooling” (1991:220). Not only this, but it is also true that individuals within a subculture may vary significantly from the dominant patterns of the group. Bearing this in mind, it is obvious that one cannot stereotype all individuals or sub-cultures on the basis of the overall contextual characteristics of a society. Nevertheless, recognizing the dominant trends among a people can provide important clues of how to connect and



communicate within a culture. This can be significant for missionaries going to another culture with the gospel, and educators need to make them aware of it. Not only this; those same educators should make use of it in the way they design their programs and curricula in their specific home-culture context.

How does the high-context/low-context issue relate to the subject of missionary preparation? Pleuddemann tells us that low-context learners are independent, reflective, theoretical and abstract. Low context students will prefer teachers who do not force their ideas on them or demand meaningless memorization. They will not be impressed with mere academic credentials. They integrate ideas with other ideas. They will tend to like theoretical courses and avoid internships. Teachers can give assignments that try to integrate theory with practice, and that explore the implications of theory, strategy, and action (1991:227).

Pleuddemann also observes that high context learners respond well to methods that are social, active, experimental, and concrete. They will respect formal credentials and be interested in formal credit for their work. They will be concerned with the practical and personal implications of the material they are studying. They can work together, and the friendships they form in training will be very meaningful to them. Good teaching methods include challenging students to contrast the “folk theology” they know from back home with solid biblical theology. Teaching should begin from experience and challenge students to reflect on theoretical implications (1991:228). While high-context students may tend to disdain the theoretical in favor of the practical, Pleuddemann reminds us that, “Missionary training must prepare students to solve

problems, and there is nothing as practical as good theory for solving unanticipated problems” (1991:228).

Those involved in the preparation of missionaries must remember that even though their culture may exhibit strong characteristics along the high-low context spectrum, there will be individuals who do not fit the stereotype. This can be of great benefit to the group. By mixing students with different contextual orientations, they can learn from each other. “Intentionally mixing high- and low-context students in the same class will stimulate both to see problems in missions from each other’s perspectives” (1991:229).

One dimension of difference between high- and low-context cultures is that of cognitive style. Cognitive style refers to the way in which an individual takes in information and processes it to make it meaningful (Bowen and Bowen 1991:205). Within this dimension, high-context people and cultures are field dependent, while low-context individuals and cultures are field independent. A majority of Two-Thirds World students seem to demonstrate field-dependent characteristics. Citing Cross, Bowen and Bowen identify these characteristics as examples of a field-sensitive orientation:

- Very sensitive to the judgement of others
  - Responsive to social reinforcement
  - Good with interpersonal relations, which are very important
  - Likes being with people; groups are very important
  - Obedience to authority important
  - Culturally determined gender roles important
  - Not analytical at problem solving
  - Extrinsic motivation very important
  - Autonomy not as important as social acceptance
- (1991:207)

From the description above, and on the basis of my own experience in the Brazilian culture, I believe that it is justifiable to conclude that Brazilian missionary candidates in general can be categorized as high context, field-dependent learners.

Bowen and Bowen give a detailed list of teaching suggestions for field dependent learners that seems to me highly appropriate for the Brazilian context. What follows is a list of their suggestions, with slight changes made for the sake of brevity.

1. A course outline is essential. Field-dependent persons need to see the planning for the whole course at one time since their thought processes are global or holistic.
2. An oral preview of the course needs to be given along with the written outline.... Clearly written course objectives will raise the level of learning.
3. In each individual lesson, a preview of the material to be learned should be given.
4. Experience should be provided with note-taking. Guides can be very helpful here.
5. Frequent feedback and reinforcement are needed.
6. Illustrations are best when they are people-centered, and taken from life.
7. Small units of work are to be preferred over larger ones.
8. Role-playing is an excellent teaching method.
9. Set deadlines towards which the student can work, and then keep the dates set; do not postpone.
10. It is better to give assigned readings rather than to tell students to read a given number of pages in the area.
11. Correction and support must be given bearing in mind that field-dependent students are much more sensitive to the praise or criticism of others.
12. Group work is preferred to individual work.
13. Field-dependent students prefer structure and direction in doing a project.
14. Students who are more visual than auditory will need to work with a textbook or duplicated notes, rather than dictated notes.
15. Visual aids of all kinds are essential.
16. The field-dependent person is reinforced by external rather than internal motivators.
17. The field-dependent person needs to see models and examples, including the example of the teacher.
18. While field-independent students prefer to do things in their own way, field-dependent students want to be told how to do a thing.
19. Criterion-based grading is best used with a field-dependent student.
20. Test material should be taken from the objectives that you have given to the class. (Bowen and Bowen 1991:211-213).



The need for culturally based missionary preparation also leads to the subject of who should serve as the trainers and educators of missionary candidates. The ideal, of course, would be for experienced national missionaries, trained to the academic level appropriate for leading students in a given context, to take responsibility for training their compatriots. However, a problem in most newer sending countries is that there is no large base of missionaries to draw from who have both the requisite field experience and advanced missiological training as well. This is a vacuum that some missionaries would be able to help fill. The issue to stress here, though, is that foreign missionaries training national missionary candidates must exhibit an extremely high level of sensitivity to their host culture. It is almost inevitable that even with the best of intentions, perspectives originating from our own national culture contexts will come out, even without our being aware of it.

For example, J. Matthew Nance, who works in missionary training in Korea, writes that, “Training will help candidates see the missionary task as doing evangelism that results in churches” (Nance 1996: Prospectus 4). This is an interesting comment. Biblically speaking, Nance would be correct in asserting that “evangelism that results in churches” is an essential element of mission. But when he identifies this as *the* missionary task, he excludes a whole range of activities that many other Christians believe are also vital elements of mission. Having served previously with the same sending agency as Nance, I know that “evangelism that results in churches” has for years been a catch phrase in his organization that has driven their institutional vision of the mission task. The point here is not to argue whether Nance is biblically correct in his



understanding of the missionary task, but that he makes an issue of teaching mission candidates from another culture to envision mission exactly as has he has been taught to do in his culture.

It is also very important to recognize that, judging from his writing, Nance does not seem to be a culturally insensitive missionary who intentionally tries to impose his organization's agenda on Koreans. On the contrary, he reveals in his writing a commitment to contextualized missionary preparation. But the fact is that he can no more escape being a product of his own context than any of the rest of us, and it is inevitable that at unpredictable points our background will force its way out.

This illustrates two needs in missionary preparation. One need is for a rigorous self-awareness and a commitment to deep, incarnational identification on the part of expatriate missionaries working to prepare nationals as crosscultural witnesses. The second need is for the development of national leaders with both training and field experience to work in the preparation of their compatriots for crosscultural witness. Pate echoes the sentiments of many when he writes that "providing an adequate number of skilled and experienced indigenous missionary instructors is perhaps the greatest need of the Two-Thirds World missionary movement" (1991b:38).

### Organizing the Training

A primary issue in setting up a training program is settling on the curriculum. What should we teach, and how? The need for a holistic approach has already been described above, and we can look to this basic commitment for our sense of direction.

What we need to do is “consider how to plan a curriculum to train the whole person, and how to relate training to culture” (Harley 1995:vii). In doing so, those training Two-Thirds World missionary candidates must face a sometimes painful question: “Should we follow a seminary-based model, or a vocational school plan?” While most Western missionaries, and Brazilian missionaries as well, have been trained in seminaries, many if not most of the new models springing up do not follow the traditional seminary academic model. We may need to opt for what is best for our students rather than continue with a model that is familiar and meaningful to us. The most important thing is to get to know our students and their culture intimately, and then provide training that will do the best job of preparing them to become effective crosscultural evangelists and disciplers, based on their needs and learning styles. The two primary questions in missionary training are, (1) “How can we develop training programmes which effectively equip the next generation to fulfill the Great Commission?”, and (2) “How can we obtain acceptance of the training programmes we develop?” (Ferris 1991:231).

This is not to say that seminaries cannot offer good missionary preparation. However, seminaries often find it difficult to prioritize elements of training that are important to good preparation for crosscultural service. A seminary-based program of missionary preparation must take holistic training seriously, and avoid any temptation to offer a strictly theoretical, academic (i.e., formal, low-context) curriculum. A serious effort must be made to blend the practical, personal, and spiritual with the academic. This is a philosophy that at this particular time in Brazil is, as they say there, a hard fish to sell. In the last few years, for the first time in history, the Brazilian Ministry of

Education is offering the possibility of accreditation to qualified seminaries. Most of the better seminaries are pursuing that accreditation, with the result being that meeting the government's academic standards is uppermost in their minds. Now is not an easy time to get the seminaries to make a commitment to the holistic approach to ministry formation represented by renewal values.

Ferris has two general guidelines for trainers struggling with what is and what is not appropriate for their training context. One is that, "Borrowed curricula are always inappropriate curricula." The other is, "Appropriate curricula are attuned to the context of the training institution" (1991:232). This has four implications:

1. Training curricula must be attuned to the constituent church.
2. Training curricula must be attuned to sending missions.
3. Training curricula must be attuned to student experience.
4. Training curricula must be attuned to prospective ministries (1991:232-233).

Concerning accreditation, Ferris believes that "the prestige attached to accreditation appeals to values contrary to Christian commitment" (1991:235). Ferris is correct in affirming that accreditation must never be viewed or used simply as a source of pride. Care must be exercised, however, before taking a dogmatic stand against placing a value on accreditation. There are a couple of trends within the church that must be avoided. The first is a basic anti-intellectualism that permeates some circles, which may represent an inappropriate hidden bias among some opponents of accreditation. Secondly, playing into this is a tendency that too many people in the church have of trying to get by with doing things in a slipshod manner. Spurning accreditation may become a spiritualized cover for laziness. Those involved in the training of missionaries



should design training that is as rigorous and as academically credible as the needs of candidates in our context would dictate. While the desirability of accreditation will vary in accordance with cultural factors, the commitment to excellence must be a constant. There is a vital need for those involved in mission education to earn the academic respect of other disciplines as a necessary first step in preparing the way for a mission ethos to permeate our seminaries. The church can afford neither laziness on the one hand, nor elitism on the other.

While the literature on missionary preparation is just now beginning to be developed, there have already been some significant strides. The newer sending churches of the Two-Thirds World have been right at the forefront of the movement to bring innovation to the task. Brazil is part of that vanguard.

### Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the reader has seen an overview of recent literature on missionary preparation, together with related topics that are relevant to the subject of contextualized training for Brazilian missionaries. First, the chapter presented an overview of missionary training and its relation to the rise of the mission movement in many of the younger churches. Second, it explored how the lack of effective preparation is linked to the problem of missionary attrition, focusing particularly on the major problem of attrition in the Brazilian missionary force. Third, the chapter looked at the philosophical underpinnings of effective training for service in crosscultural mission. Fourth, it considered the importance of sensitivity to cultural context in missionary preparation, and also some of the cultural characteristics of Brazilian missionaries that have been



identified in missionary training literature. The chapter concluded with a consideration of factors that might be considered in organizing a training program.

## Chapter 3

### Brazilian Culture and Missionary Preparation

#### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter first offers an overview of the Brazilians' frustrating search for a national sense of identity. It follows this introduction with a presentation of Brazilian culture, using as a framework the model of David Burnett.

#### The Elusive Identity Of Brazil

*Que país é este?* What kind of a country is this? This question, expressed by well-known and respected Brazilians at various stages of their history, has in recent times been brought to the public consciousness in the form of a well-known poem by Affonso Romano de Sant'Ana, and a popular rock song with the same title. This question reverberates hauntingly throughout Brazilian society as an expression of a people in search of an identity.

Brazil comes by its identity crisis honestly. Brazil began as a colony, the only colony in history to provide a refuge for the king of the colonizing country. This happened when Napoleon overran Portugal in 1808 and the court fled to the colonial capital of Rio de Janeiro. Brazil thus became the seat of empire while at the same time remaining a subservient colony. Furthermore, while other former colonies have the common, unifying experience of banding together to throw off the yoke of the oppressor, Brazil's independence was declared by a Portuguese prince who proceeded to establish himself as Emperor of Brazil with the approval of his father, the king of Portugal, who had returned to Europe after the Napoleonic wars. As Brazilian writers have observed

(Buarque de Hollanda 2000:106), it is a complicated story, and it is not without reason that Brazil has a problem with historical focus around the question of national identity.

What kind of a country is this Brazil? Answers are elusive. One Brazilian anthropologist observed that, “Brazil is a being that is one part known, and one part mystery, like a grand and powerful spirit” (DaMatta 1984:12). Aside from the lack of easily identifiable answers rooted in history, there are many other obstacles in the way of defining the essence of Brazil. Antonio Carlos “Tom” Jobim, the famous Brazilian musician who was one of the creators of the *bossa nova* musical form, gave expression to the complicated nature of Brazilian reality in his oft-cited phrase, “Brazil is not for beginners.”

One obstacle to understanding Brazil is its sheer magnitude. “Brazil is so diverse that generalizations about it run the risk of being either bland platitudes of the lowest-common-denominator-variety or averages that mask great variations” (Schneider 1996:1). Brazil occupies roughly half of the South American land mass, an area equal to the size of the contiguous forty-eight states of the United States. The various regions are linked primarily by two-lane roads, very often traversing jungles, swamps, semi-deserts, and vast open spaces. In addition, there are also differences between a vast array of ethnic groups, the differences between isolated rural residents and the inhabitants of two of the ten largest cities in the world (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), the vast chasms separating economic classes, and the wide ideological spectrums one encounters. For many reasons, “There is no *one* Brazil. There are various” (Madureira and Madureira 2000:122).

In Brazil, the climatic, ethnic, and cultural differences between the regions are accentuated. These regional cultural differences are rooted in the style of colonialism exercised by Portugal. The Portuguese failure to organize an effective administration of their colony led to a situation in which the titleholders of the various captaincies were left to their own devices, resulting in different practices and accentuated cultural differences from one area to the other (Page 1995:47).

The cultural differences between the regions, and even between states within the same geographical region, are easily observable to this day. This is especially so in the rural areas, where television as a unifying cultural force did not arrive in many places until the 1970's or 1980's. While the effects of media extension throughout the country, as well as the homogenizing effects of internal migration from rural to urban areas since the end of WWII, exercise a unifying influence over regional cultural diversity, that diversity still exists in large measure.

In addition, "The essence of Brazilianidade is elusive, in large part because of the multiple non-Brazilian influences upon Brazilian society and culture" (Page 1995:192). The significance of Brazil's ethnic origins, plus later additions to the Brazilian melting pot, and their significance for understanding Brazilian culture will be discussed in more detail below. But the immigration of non-native ethnic groups is only part of the story. Brazilians have been influenced culturally, not only by internal dynamics resulting from the multiplicity of ethnic groups in the Brazilian melting pot, but in varying degrees and at different moments in their history by external forces emanating from Europe and the United States.



One primary cause of the difficulty in defining Brazilian identity is the fact that Brazil is a study in contradictions, a trait so strong that, in itself, it must be considered a part of Brazilian cultural identity. For example, while Brazil is an extremely hierarchical society, and most people most of the time accept it as such, Brazilians are geniuses at finding ways to undermine and get around the established rules and structures when they set their minds to it (Adiwardana 2004:personal interview). Another illustration is the commonly accepted truism that Brazilians are a very peaceful people; they only experienced one war in their history as an independent nation until their entry into World War II on the side of the Allies. But this truism belies the fact that there have been several internal armed military conflicts, and the further fact that brutal methods are employed by the wealthy to keep their poor dependents in line. This is a direct historical continuation from the brutal practice of slavery.

Another example of the contradictions that make Brazil what it is lies in the tremendous gap between the rich and the poor. As João Pedro Stédile, economist and one of the national coordinators of MST, the landless peasant's movement for agrarian land reform, puts it, "We are the most unequal society in the world. There is no other country on our planet where the rich are so rich in the face of the poor who are so poor" (2000:129). Two sets of statistics will suffice to demonstrate the dramatic nature of this contradiction. In describing the distribution of income, political scientist Ronald Schneider tells us that, "In 1960 the top 10 percent of earners received 39.6 percent of total income, and the bottom decile got but 1.9 percent. This gap grew to 48.7 and 0.8 percent at the trough of the recession in 1991 as the richest 1 percent of Brazilians received 14 percent of income compared to 12 percent for the poorest half" (1996:172).

Meanwhile, land distribution is just as unequal. About 40,000 large landholders own half of the arable land, while 4.5 million small landholders try to survive on the other half, and 4.8 million families are forced to work on land that belongs to others, if they manage to work at all (Stédile 2000:128). Another researcher reports that five percent of the population owns eighty percent of the land (Page 1995:7). No understanding of Brazil can be adequate without recognizing the existence of these basic realities.

Sometimes, the fact that Brazil presents a study in contradictions is quite deliberate. Brazilians can be cunning in letting outsiders see only what they want them to see. Afro-Brazilian slaves learned to disguise *capoeira* (a form of martial arts using the feet) as a dance; elaborate African meals which they intended for their deities were ostensibly prepared for their white masters (Page 1995: 2); and continued worship of their African deities was also disguised in the form of adoration of Catholic saints, for whom the slaves designated equivalents in the African pantheon.

The masters were capable of trickery of their own. One of the most well-known and enduring slang expressions in Brazil is “*para inglês ver*”, which literally means, “for the English to see.” It refers to a pattern of deception practiced during the middle of the nineteenth century, when English imperialism was at its apex and Brazil was dependent on good relations with them. At this time, Britain was using its power to try to exterminate the trade in slaves from Africa. Brazilian slaveholders were determined to keep the practice going, but hid the reality when the British were looking. They would present a façade “for the English to see,” while insiders knew that the truth was quite

different. Even today, anyone who accepts surface appearances and explanations at face value may easily miss a far different truth hidden in plain sight.

Still another part of the difficulty in defining Brazil is due to the fact that the responses which strike the strongest chord in terms of what Brazilians most want to become remain maddeningly elusive in practice. Much of the frustration emanating from Brazilians' inability to attain what they want for their society is rooted in the Brazilian psyche as a by-product of the colonial experience and its ongoing structural and psychological influence on contemporary Brazilian life. Primary among the lingering historical realities stemming from colonial Brazil is the shocking chasm between the rich and the poor, outlined above. Brazilian philosopher and writer Gerd Bornheim comments,

But it is in traveling through this Brazil that I come to realize, on an increasingly intimate level, how difficult it is for us to form and firm up an image of the *Brazilian person*. So great are the diversity and the disconnections created, in their greatest part, by the wrong distribution of wealth, that it becomes difficult to understand what we are made of and, almost as a consequence, of what solutions we are capable in the world as it is. (2000:90)

This inability to understand and to act effectively upon the world is one of the primary consequences of the colonized mind. Gilberto Freyre, for example, writes that from the time of the colonial and slaveholding period of Brazilian history, "a type of sadism on the part of the white man and masochism on the part of the Indian or African woman has predominated in the sexual relations, as well as in the social sphere, of the European man with the races submitted to his domination" (2000:121). This is significant not only for pointing out the brutal nature of the colonial domination, but because it set a pattern discernible in the relations between dominate and oppressed social classes in wider areas of life. "This sadism on the part of the master and the



correspondent masochism of the slave, going beyond the sphere of social and domestic life, has been felt throughout our development, in a larger field: social and political” (Freyre 2000:123). In the “Russian America” that is Brazil, writes Freyre, there remains a masochistic residue that lends itself not so much to the will to change wrongs within the political or economic system as “the pure pleasure of suffering, to be the victim, or to sacrifice oneself”. This predisposition, he writes, allows the dominant classes to sustain their position under the guise of the “principle of Authority” or the “defense of Order” (2000:123).

The social equilibrium is unchanged. Whereas before there were sadists and masochists, masters and slaves, now there are doctors and the illiterate, individuals from a predominately European culture or a principally African or Amerindian culture (Freyre 2000:123). Thus, the violence of colonialism has left a scar on the national psyche that still exists, shaping the relationship between the classes and perpetuating the domination of a small elite.

But not only do people who have been subjected to colonialism react internally in ways that bring about inertia and an inability to act for change, but in addition colonialism leaves behind a social structure that is resistant to change. Albert Memmi has written in the African context, but his observations may also help to explain the maddening difficulty Brazilians experience in trying to bring about structural change in their society. According to Memmi, “Colonized society is a diseased society in which internal dynamics no longer succeed in creating new structures. Its century-hardened face has become nothing more than a mask under which it slowly smothers and dies.



Such a society cannot dissolve the conflicts of generations, for it is unable to be transformed” (1965:98-99).

Brazilians themselves are the first to recognize the need for national self definition, and acknowledge it openly. “We are a people in search of itself, that anxiously wishes—and urgently needs!—to find itself, if even just to understand what to expect of itself and of the country” (Sobral and Aguiar 2000:9). More than 500 years since its founding as a Portuguese colony in 1500, Brazil enters the twenty-first century still trying to get its bearings and realize its enormous potential.

The fact is that we are always trying to get our bearings and come to grips with our identity....And so... Brazil is a new country. The complicated thing about it is that it's always new, even after 500 years. A mystery, like a snake that changes its skin. We changed, just a little while ago (referring to the change from the military dictatorship to democracy). Brazil was forced to change skin, once again, and now, for us to understand ourselves, we have to change our way of thinking, too. (Madureira & Madureira 2000:120)

Many Brazilians, including intellectuals, politicians, social leaders, and the people as a whole, feel a need to come to grips with what defines them as a people. It seems that there is almost a sense that the country cannot go forward and fulfill its enormous potential without first coming to grips with the issue of national identity. Eloísa Buarque de Hollanda is a professor of communications and coordinator of the Advanced Program of Contemporary Culture at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She writes,

There is no one who can synthesize what Brazil is in actuality. This became evident in the *500 Years* [a planned yearlong celebration of the Portuguese discovery of Brazil in 1500 A.D.]. A celebration that never happened because no one was able to formulate and define what exactly is this country of 500 years. Not the government, not the people, not the opposition. But on the other hand, no one has formulated another country called Brazil. We don't have our identity formed, not yet. No attempt at formulation has prevailed, up to now, none has been disseminated, none has been popularized. That is why no one is able to celebrate this country. (2000:113)

The question of Brazilian identity and character is urgent not only for the Brazilians as a people and as a country. It is also an important question for Christian mission in the twenty-first century, because the church in Brazil is poised to make a significant contribution to world mission. Brazilians have been making a contribution for some time in mission to countries with significant cultural similarities—other Latin American countries, Portugal, Spain, and other former Portuguese colonies in Africa like Mozambique, Angola and Cabo Verde. In the last couple of decades, however, their outreach has been extended to include unreached peoples, often in countries closed to a traditional (and Western) missionary presence. Those efforts hold enormous potential for growth and effectiveness in the new century.

If that potential is to be realized, it is imperative that Brazilian missionaries and the churches that send and support them not only have a strong sense of identity as Brazilian Christians, but also that they recognize factors in their history, culture and character that influence in both positive and negative ways their effectiveness in mission in different places. This self-definition is not needed in order to be able to reproduce characteristics of Brazilian Christianity in other cultures. To the contrary, a well-formed sense of identity is a foundation for being able to recognize and respect differences in others.

Coming to grips with the essence of Brazilianness is a project that has confounded Brazilian intellectuals and the nation as a whole for centuries. It would be arrogant in the extreme for a North American like myself to presume to capture definitively the essence of what eludes them. However, sometimes outsiders who have been graciously accepted by cultural insiders, and have consequently gained an intimate personal knowledge of a

people and culture, have a unique perspective that may contribute something to their dialogue.

The intention in this chapter is to do so with a particular focus on two ways in which Brazilian culture affects the missionary task. First, how does Brazilian culture influence Brazilian missionaries' cultural adaptation and effectiveness in crosscultural mission? Secondly, in light of that, what should it mean for pre-field preparation for Brazilian missionaries?

One final word needs to be said before launching into an exploration of Brazilian culture. Having pointed out the difficulties which Brazilians themselves perceive in forging a national identity and comprehensive understanding of Brazilian culture and society, it would be relatively easy as a North American writing on Brazilian culture to fall into the trap of judging Brazil on the basis of foreign categories, concepts and values. Such an ethnocentric approach would be both unproductive and unfair. It has been argued that the fundamental cause of the baffling variety of confusing and incongruous diversity we encounter in Brazil is rooted in the way Brazil mixes the Western and non-Western, and also the modern and traditional, thus creating what has been called the "Brazilian puzzle" or the "Brazilian dilemma" (Hess and DaMatta 1995:2). It would be a mistake to consider Brazil an essentially Western nation with some non-Western characteristics still hanging on among the lower classes. Very often, below the European veneer of its institutions and customs, other values and rules exercise enormous influence, and may do so in any imaginable circumstance, including among the elite.

Similarly, the baffling array of contrasts and outright contradictions with which Brazil confronts us may provoke in the outside observer a sense that Brazil borders on the



ridiculous. President Charles de Gaulle of France voiced just such a thought when he said that Brazil “is not a serious country” (see Barbosa 1995:46). From a Western perspective, it may appear that way.

It is imperative to seek to understand Brazil on Brazilian terms, something which can only be done by Brazilians and, to a lesser extent, by those who have been accepted by them as cultural insiders on some level. We need to look for the internal logic in Brazilian categories and values from their perspective. That is the only way in which Brazil will ever “make sense”, and the only way we can be effective in preparing Brazilian missions candidates in culturally appropriate and effective ways.

### Analysis of Brazilian Culture

While an analysis of Brazil’s macro culture is desirable, it is beyond the scope of this study. This study selectively explores specific aspects of Brazilian national culture, with an eye toward analyzing how these dimensions bear upon our consideration in training Brazilian missionaries for crosscultural ministry.

I have chosen David Burnett’s cultural analysis model for this study. It meets Luzbetak’s criteria for a good model, as it is useful (well-suited for organizing a body of knowledge), open (recognizing the limitations), fitting (logical and consistent), and stimulating (having the capacity to arouse the imagination) (Luzbetak 1988:136-137). In addition, it is simple, straightforward, and easily transferable.

Several other models of culture could have been possibilities for the theoretical framework of the research on Brazilian culture. One has been offered by Clifford Geertz, who sees in the symbolic dimensions of social action a way to enter into the existential



realities of life (1973:30), and for whom metaphysical contexts provide a framework for understanding a wide range of experience (1973:123), with religion symbolizing a people's worldview (1973:131). While Geertz finds great significance in concrete, symbolic acts, Clyde Kluckhohn sees culture not so much in terms of the visible act, the speech, or product, but rather as "a way of thinking, feeling, believing," or "patterns for doing certain things in certain ways, not the doing of them" (1962:25). Luzbetak advocates a composite missiological perspective of culture as a socially shared design for living (1988:156-166). An interesting model of Brazilian culture developed by Roberto DaMatta, which will be mentioned again in this chapter, presents Brazilian cosmology as a ritual triangle consisting of three domains: the house, the street, and the other world (1998:109-122; 2000:11-22, 97-100).

Burnett suggests a series of six groups of questions designed to highlight a culture's worldview themes (2002:35). They are:

1. The cosmos—what is reality? How does society understand the nature of the universe in which it exists? Is the material world all that exists, or is there a non-material reality?
2. Self—What is human? How does society understand the question, "Who am I?" What model do they have to understand themselves as persons?
3. Knowing—What is truth? How does one come to know things about reality?
4. Community—What is society? How do people understand their involvement within the communities in which they exist?
5. Time—What is time? How is this most obscure component of our existence perceived by society?

6. Value—What is good? Value here is defined as good ends, or ideals one ought to pursue.

### The Cosmos

A strong spiritual and mystical focus pervades Brazilian culture. This dimension is part of the essence of the Brazilian soul (Boff 2000b:97). Leonardo Boff holds that religious principles and teachings, especially concerning personal conduct and relationships with others, have profoundly penetrated the Brazilian psyche and conduct. As evidence of this, he relates that Brazil never really passed through a period of rationalism and antimysticism, except perhaps as an echo of what was going on elsewhere. Brazilian culture was never based on materialism or rationalism—“Much to the contrary” (2000a:192).

Most Brazilians instinctively look to God. In the words of DaMatta, “We are a people that believes profoundly in another world” (1998:117). Not only do Brazilians believe in another world, but they look in that direction for a solution to their problems in this one. “For the Brazilians, God is not the problem but the solution to their problems” (Boff 2000a:192). This tendency has been accentuated, perhaps, by a history of exclusion and marginalization which the Brazilian masses have suffered for centuries. Too often, they look to God primarily because there is so little realistic hope to be found anywhere else. The poor look to the afterlife in the hope that “after death they may finally receive the justice and equality denied them in this difficult existence” (Schneider 1996:193-194).

The Brazilian worldview is permeated with a belief in the presence of the divine. “Deep down, whether by stimulation or for recrimination, we feel that we are

accompanied by God and by divine forces in every step of our lives” (Boff 2000a:192).

This fact is illustrated in common, everyday expressions that reveal an underlying worldview. Some of the most common of these expressions are *meu Deus!* (my God!), *graças a Deus* (thank God), *Deus te pague* (God will repay you), *Deus o acompanhe* (God be with you), *fique com Deus* (stay with God) (Boff 2000b:100), or perhaps the most common of all, *se Deus quiser* (if God wills).

This innate religiosity is expressed today through three primary religious traditions—Catholicism, various forms of spiritism, and a wide spectrum of evangelical churches. Although these are the primary traditions in existence today, it is important to recognize that the animistic beliefs of native Indian tribes has exercised a profound influence on Brazilian religiosity, particularly as it has mingled with popular Catholicism and African spiritism.

One important area where native religions have influenced the Brazilian worldview is at the point of healing. The *pagé* (medicine man) was the most important person in tribal society. He interpreted the supernatural, foretold the future, and healed the sick through jungle medicines and faith healing. Today, natural medicine and faith healing are basic ingredients of Brazilian culture (Page 1995:90), and reflective of the Brazilian worldview—across social classes. This worldview finds overt expression in popular Catholicism, spiritism, and in charismatic forms of evangelical Christianity.

Leonardo Boff gives a coherent and characteristically Brazilian expression to the dynamic interplay between the different religious systems one encounters in Brazil, revealing significant aspects of the Brazilian worldview:

The indigenous religions entered into the syncretism with a Christian base conferring a perception of the Divine immersed in nature and in the elemental



cosmic forces. Also important is the contribution of the Afro-Brazilian religions (*nagô*, *candomblé*, *umbanda*, *macumba* and others). They populate nature with positive and negative energies and see every human being as a potential carrier of divinity. This vision fills the daily routine with magic, because those who profess belief know themselves to be accompanied by the orixás, by the protecting saints and by the providential hand of God. Because of this religious density, there is a *jeito* [a creative way around] for everything, and there can be a beneficial way out. (2000a:193)

In Brazil, while these different belief systems are substantially different from each other, from the beginning there has been considerable interplay and mutual influence between them. Here, this study examines each of the principal current Brazilian religious traditions in turn, considering the tradition's impact on Brazilian cultural practices, values and worldview.

Roman Catholicism. The religious scene in Brazil is dominated by the Catholic Church, which until 1890 was the official religion of the nation, and was basic in the foundation of Brazil and in the formation of a set of values that are essential to Brazilian culture (DaMatta 1998:113). Even though the Catholic Church has lost its official status, in many contexts it still is able to act as the *de facto* state religion. It represents the basic form of structured religion recognized by society, and administers the rites that mark one's passage through life. Other forms of religiosity offer the chance for more personal connections with the other world. Popular Catholicism is chief among these. This form of Catholicism contains an enormous emphasis on personal relations, which DaMatta sees as ultimately giving profound meaning to the Brazilian social world. But instead of viewing traditional and folk Catholicism in a competitive light, DaMatta sees them as being complementary (1998:116).

From the first European presence, Catholicism was an integral part of the Brazilian identity. Pedro Alvez Cabral "discovered" Brazil when his ship ran aground off



the coast of what is now the state of Bahia in April of 1500. In their first reports of their discoveries, the Portuguese struck a note that would often be repeated in colonial times. A member of Cabral's party, Pero Vaz de Caminha, wrote to the King of Portugal concerning his impressions of Brazil. He was struck by the nude, innocent Indians, fertile soil, and abundant waters. "However," he wrote, "the best fruit that we can produce in Brazil, it appears to me, will be to save this people. And this should be the principle seed that Your Highness should sow there" (cited in Sobral and Aguiar 2000:357).

From the very beginning of Portuguese colonization, when disembarking from their boats the Europeans were met by unashamedly nude and friendly women on the beach, miscegenation was an integral part of colonial behavior. The only white women in Brazil in the early colonial period either came as wives of the patriarchal landowners, or were born in Brazil as a result of those unions (Ribeiro 1995:89). Consequently, the only women available to the common European men were Indians, who apparently cooperated freely, for reasons of their own (Freyre 2000:84). Their offspring were called *mamelucas*, neither Portuguese nor Indian, and were the first Brazilians, even though they as yet had no consciousness of that identity. Female children born of these unions had very little opportunity to carve out a respectable niche for themselves in society, but one option open to them that conferred a sense of dignity was in assuming the role of the contrite faithful of Catholic saints. Still retaining much of the Indian animism of their mothers, these were the people who planted popular, or folk, Catholicism in Brazil (Ribeiro 1995:90). Later, folk Catholicism would be influenced further by the input of African slaves and, much later, by forms of spiritism imported from Europe.

The harsh backlands of northeastern Brazil, called the *sertão*, is the soil which produced much of what is today recognized as popular Catholicism. It was “a mixture of very traditional, primitive Lusitanian Catholicism that had gone to seed and elements of both Indian and African spiritual beliefs” (Page 1995:326). A rigorous and precarious existence, complicated by very infrequent contact with the teachings and rites of the institutional church, were elements that contributed to the growth of the movement. One of its characteristics was the *promessa*, promise, to perform a sacrificial act in return for fulfillment of a petition (1995:326).

The notion of doing something for God, or a saint, or, in the case of spiritist religions, for a spirit or deity, in order to receive something in return, remains a basic element in Brazilian religious practice and worldview. In the summer of 2004, for example, while doing research for this chapter, I visited a sixteenth-century convent on the coast of the state of Espírito Santo. There, one can find numerous plaques, pictures and other memorabilia left in gratitude to Mary for miracles granted in response to *promessas*, some dating all the way up to contemporary times.

Leonardo Boff contends that “the greatest cultural creation made in Brazil is represented by popular Christianity” (2000b:102). Marginalized by the political and religious system, the poor expressed their religious experience through popular culture in a way that was directed more by their unconscious and emotional side than by logic or doctrine. For Boff, popular Christianity “is not a decadence from official Christianity, but a form that is different, popular and syncretistic to express the essence of the Christian message” (2000b:102).

Boff also believes that the syncretism of Christian, African, and indigenous elements is another significant creation of popular culture, characteristic of “the Brazilian spiritual atmosphere” (2000b:102). Boff goes on to state that the Brazilian people “are not dogmatic, nor fundamentalist, nor obsessed with their beliefs. They are tolerant, respectful of the many religious paths, because they believe that God is in all” of the various religious expressions (2000b:102).

Darcy Ribeiro writes that the extraordinary vitality of the Iberian nations in the colonial period is explained by their identity as mercantile Salvationist empires (1995:64). The Catholic identity of the Brazilian colony was so strong that professing Catholic faith was the requirement for immigrants wishing to go there. There was no problem with admitting people of other races, but there was no admittance for heretics professing another religious faith (Freyre 2000:102). Gilberto Freyre sees a common Catholic identity as the unifying force in the colonial period. Catholic solidarity, he asserts, was what united the Brazilians against challenges to Portuguese rule during the colonial period by French Calvinists (the Huguenots), the Reformed Dutch, and the English Protestants. “That is why it is so difficult, in truth, to separate the Brazilian from the Catholic: Catholicism really was the cement of our unity” (2000:102-103).

The Portuguese really did believe in the mission to convert the Indians, as symbolized by the bold display of the cross on the sails of the ships that came to the New World (Skidmore 1999:8). While other orders were present, the most vigorous and influential missionaries were the Jesuits, who saw their mission as a utopian project (Ribeiro 1995:54). Their efforts to gather the Indians into safe missions where they would be taught European culture and the Christian faith brought them into conflict with



the great lords of the plantations, who saw the Jesuits as depriving them of access to the slaves they wanted. The oligarchy's victory in that early struggle would chart the direction for centuries of Brazilian social history.

Why did the Church lose this battle for the colony's soul? First, we must recognize the obvious: there were conflicting motives at play in colonizing Brazil. In addition to the spiritual motive outlined above, the Portuguese were looking for trade and adventure (Skidmore 1999:8). The Church succumbed to interests whose primary value was the profit motive. Certainly, the financial and political power of the Church's opponents offers part of the answer. In fact, it could be argued that while the Jesuit mission opposed and finally succumbed to the interests of the colonizers, a significant part of the Church allied itself with the commercial interests. But a deeper look reveals an even more foundational explanation.

In his 1936 classic, *Raízes do Brasil (Roots of Brazil)*, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda writes about the relaxed Brazilian approach to religion within a context of formal orthodoxy (1995:149-151). He criticizes the Brazilian tendency to make of God one's intimate, personal friend. But it strikes me that this personal friendship with God, as Holanda describes and critiques it, does not denote an intimate, daily walk of love and obedience, but a presumed familiarity that allows Brazilians to assume that God is their friend and will treat them accordingly, as any good Brazilian friend would: in other words, deny them nothing, and excuse anything. As one non-Brazilian observer put it, "Catholicism in Portugal's prize colony tended to be nearly a continent wide and an inch deep" (Page 1995:324).



Holanda, who is much more critical of the shortcomings in Brazilian popular religiosity than most commentators, describes the Brazilian brand of Catholicism as characteristically treating the saints with an intimacy that borders on the disrespectful, so much so that there is a story of the Christ descending from the altar to dance the samba with the people. This form of religious practice, Holanda says, has roots on the Iberian Peninsula, where people turned during the middle ages from the majestic, palatial Catholicism of the cathedrals to the chapel attached to the family dwelling, where they can be in intimacy with God and even turn him into a family friend, domestic and near (1995:149).

Obviously, it is a short jump from a God who is domestic and near to a God who is domesticated and expected to do our bidding, without any commitment, obedience or effort required on the human side. And it is exactly this that Holanda believes happened. He calls Brazilian religiosity a “surface-level religion,” “almost carnal in its attachment to the concrete and in its belligerent incomprehension of all true spirituality” (1995:150). No one, he writes, would expect such a religion to lift itself up to produce any kind of powerful social morality. In the absence of moral leadership from the Church in the social sphere, it was left for others to act. “It is not surprising, then, that our Republic was created by Positivists, or agnostics, and our Independence was the work of Masons” (:150).

Spiritism. “Spiritism” is an encompassing term in Brazil that, in popular usage, refers to a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices involving spirit mediums. Primary among these religious groups are, in no particular order of importance, *Kardecismo*, *Candomblé*, and *Umbanda*.

*Kardecismo* is a form of intellectual and philosophical spiritism founded by the Frenchman Allan Kardec in the nineteenth century, and which encountered a ready acceptance among the middle class in the southern part of Brazil. It combines “empirical research, philosophical reflection, and right action governed by the law of karma and the Christian golden rule” (Hess 1994:12). Kardec’s system included “a highly rationalized belief in the existence of incorporeal beings in interplanetary space, and in the possibility of communicating with them” (Page 1995:365). Kardec did not consider himself a Christian, but he saw the moral basis of his philosophy in the teachings of Jesus (Hess 1994:12-13). *Kardecismo* includes a strong component of charity and philanthropy, which benefits both the giver and the receiver. Adherents of this form of spiritism distance themselves from the Afro-Brazilian forms of spirit mediumship religions discussed below, considering them to be “low” forms of spiritism (Page 1995:365). As a matter of fact, adherents of *Kardecismo* refer to themselves as *Espíritas*, Spiritists, but do not use the same term for practitioners of spirit mediumship religions of African origins (Hess 1994:15).

For these reasons, *Kardecismo* is a form of spirit mediumship religion that appeals primarily to the educated members of the middle and upper classes in Brazil. It has been my experience as a former university student worker in Brazil that Spiritism has a credibility within Brazilian academia that Christianity often does not. In Brazil, “Being a Spiritist is one way of being an intellectual” (Brown 1994: 16).

We now turn to a different category of spirit mediumship religions in Brazil. The importance of Afro-Brazilian religions for Brazilian culture and worldview cannot be overestimated. “Religious beliefs originating in Africa have penetrated every corner of

Brazilian society....In a country where 90 percent of the people list themselves as Roman Catholic, as many as one in three may participate actively at one time or another in some form of Afro-Brazilian worship” (Page 1995:352, 353). It is important to note that the one in three ratio refers to *active* participation; it does not refer to the many Brazilians who observe some form of spiritist practice or who have been influenced by spiritist values and beliefs without ever participating formally in their rites.

*Candomblé* is the most well-known of the many African religions that established themselves in Brazil. It arrived through slaves taken from the Yoruba people of West Africa, who today comprise one of the major ethnic groups of Nigeria. One of the main features of *candomblé* is belief in the ancestor spirits of the Yoruba, called *orixás* (orishas). These ancestor spirits are associated with natural phenomena such as the sea, thunder, and fresh water, and are often associated as well with kings and queens of ancient times (Hess 1994:16). They are unseen beings that are nevertheless considered to exist on this earth (Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou 1999:48, 54). They thus fall into a category between visible creatures of this world and unseen beings of other worlds, a category which does not fit the traditional Western worldview and which Hiebert labeled the “excluded middle” (Hiebert 1994:196-198). The *orixás* are intermediaries between the supreme god, Olurum, and human beings, exercising a great influence in the daily lives of the people. Every individual, family or group has their own *orixá*, which is worshiped with sacrifices (Barro 1993:3).

In *candomblé* ceremonies, the initial phase includes animal sacrifices, which are closed to the uninitiated. Afterward, the congregation gathers around an open area. On one side are the drummers and a throne for the priest or priestess, called *pai* or *mãe do*



*santo* (father or mother of the saint). An opening ceremony involves placating and getting rid of *Exu*, a spirit that is associated with the devil. After this, the initiates, called *filhos* and *filhas do santo* (sons and daughters of the saint) enter and perform prescribed rituals, highlighted by the moment when the different *orixás* “mount,” or take possession of, their particular devotees among the initiates. These individuals enter into a trance, and “the person possessed will shake convulsively, scream, gyrate wildly about the room, and flop to the floor like a rag doll. The voice and movements of the medium will become those of the *orixá*” (Page 1995:362). Then, “At a specified time, the congregation is invited to converse with the mediums and share their problems with them, and generally the medium offers some hope for the desperate” (Barro 1993:7).

*Macumba* is a word that may mean black magic (Hess 1994:146), but also refers to an Afro-Brazilian religious tradition that is a variant of *candomblé* and is popular in and around Rio de Janeiro (Page 1995:365). In the 1920’s, *macumba* mixed with some novel offshoots of *Kardecismo* to produce *umbanda*, which “applied the rationality of Kardecism to elements of *macumba*” (:365). The movement coincided with a period of rising nationalism, and the first *umbanda* mediums may have been disaffected Spiritists who wanted to be open to spirits of a more Brazilian nature (Hess 1994:16). While the *orixás* are venerated (Page 1995:366), *umbanda* mediums are most known for receiving the spirits of Brazilian Indians (called *caboclos*), and former African slaves called *pretos velhos* (old blacks). Many of the spirits conform to typical Brazilian archetypes. In a typical session, members of the congregation consult mediums, seeking practical advice for the problems they encounter in their everyday lives (:368).



*Umbanda* practitioners traditionally have referred to themselves as Roman Catholic, but this may be changing as they come to regard their group as a legitimate and distinct religion. In the state of Rio de Janeiro alone, there are an estimated forty thousand *umbanda* spirit centers (Page 1995:369).

The influence of religions with roots in Africa is remarkable, especially considering the almost universal identification of Brazilians with Catholicism throughout their entire history, and the fact that these religions were diffused by slaves who were expected to at least make a show of following their masters' religion. Reasons for this influence must be sought in both history and in the unique Brazilian culture.

Slave traders put all African tribal groups together indiscriminately. One of the results was that their religions were mixed together and evolved as a result. African beliefs interacted as well with Roman Catholic and native Indian beliefs, with the slaves adapting each according to their own necessities (Page 1995:357). As Africans observed certain similarities between the *orixás* and the way Catholic saints were venerated in popular Catholicism, some came to be identified as interchangeable. Thus Iemenjá, for example, goddess of the sea and the highest feminine *orixá* in the pantheon of spirits, became identified with the Virgin Mary. Both African slaves and their Portuguese masters interacted with their *orixás*, saints and guardian angels in a way that was both very personal and highly superstitious (:357). These traits continue to exert a significant influence in Brazilian spirituality and worldview today.

One important reason for the Portuguese interaction with the *orixás* in colonial times is to be found in the domestic setup of the plantation house. Some slaves, among them wet nurses for the master's white children, would be brought from the slave

quarters to live in the plantation house with a new status almost as poorer members of the family (Freyre 2000:406). These slaves who rose into the master's house brought with them their own syncretized brand of religion including Catholicism, African spiritism, and perhaps elements of native American animism as well. Gilberto Freyre describes the variety of stories and fears that they would then pass on to the master's family, especially the children, and speculates that "the Brazilian boy of colonial times saw himself surrounded by the biggest and most terrible 'boogey-men' than all the other boys in the world" (:383). The ruling Brazilian class, then, absorbed much of the worldview of the Afro-Brazilians who cared for them, as explained by Peter McGregor:

We have seen that Brazilian gentry practically sucked a knowledge of magic from the breasts of their Negro milk-mothers. This, allied to the widespread toleration and even encouragement of miscegenation, the hospitable climate with its ever-present sunshine and exuberant vegetation, and education emphasizing the humanities and philosophical knowledge—all this contributed to the development of an innate spirit of tolerance which distinguishes the Brazilian character today, and to the mystic outlook of the Brazilian himself, with his lighthearted attitude towards strict rules and dogma. (1966:86)

While the form that Afro-Brazilian religions took would vary from region to region, they held some elements in common. Deities would be summoned when people felt the need for their help in dealing with suffering, the irrational, or the unknown. Deities would be called as well during crucial moments of the life cycle. Rituals would be observed, and a medium would enter into a trance, then bringing words of comfort, advice, and prophecy for the faithful (Page 1995:354-355).

The *orixás* survived the cultural genocide implicit in slavery because "they have found a congenial environment amidst the peculiar religiosity of the Roman Catholicism brought to the New World by the Portuguese and amidst the animist beliefs of the Brazilian Indians....Indeed, the African deities contribute heavily to, and in turn draw

heavily on, an essential element of Brazilianness, a proclivity toward magic and mysticism” (Page 1995:354). In addition to the Brazilian affinity for the supernatural, another attraction of the Afro-Brazilian religions has been the absence of a notion of sin and guilt (:362). They also are helped by their diversity, decentralization, and lack of a clearly defined dogma (:369).

The influence of Afro-Brazilian religions on Brazilian culture, despite its surface-level Catholicism, has been deep and permanent, touching all strata of society. The depth to which this was accomplished by the year 1888, when the slaves were finally freed, has been captured vividly by David St. Clair:

Belief, or at least the fear of not believing, had been in the land for almost 350 years! Whites, mulattoes and blacks had grown up—fifteen generations of Brazilians—hearing of Ymenja’s powers, what Ogun was capable of doing and the dread of going against Exú. Fifteen generations of Brazilians had listened to their nurses tell of the demons in the jungles and the devils in the seas. Fifteen generations grew up hearing tales of death by the evil eye, of illnesses cured by spirit consul and of marriages saved by spirit intervention. No Brazilian then or now gives a second thought to the pulsing of drums from a slum section or a spirit church. No modern Brazilian even questions the right of spirit believers to buy their ground snakeskins and colored plaster images in shops located next to supermarkets and air-conditioned banks. No Brazilian is ever surprised to hear of someone who went to doctor after doctor until finally he went to a spirit session and walked away cured. (1971:69)

Drawing on both Catholicism and different forms of spirit mediumship religions, Brazilian culture is infused with religious rites and rich symbolism. These rites and symbols help to make the other world more tangible, and serve to bring its powers to bear on alleviating suffering and meeting concrete needs in this world. In contrast, most Brazilian Protestant groups are comparatively weak in their use of symbolism, in no small part as a reaction against what is going on all around them.



Evangelicals. As noted above, Brazilians derived their national identity in large part from their united opposition to Protestant incursions onto Brazilian territory. One such incursion was a short-lived sixteenth-century French Huguenot settlement in the Bay of Guanabara facing what today is Rio de Janeiro. The Huguenots came in hopes of finding a refuge from persecution and to evangelize the Indians, but they were expelled (Gates 1972:16). The most serious threat to Catholic hegemony was the lengthy Dutch occupation of Pernambuco along the northeastern coast in the seventeenth century. The struggle against the Dutch was the largest political-military conflict of the colonial era (Fausto 2001:45). After this, there was no significant Protestant presence in Brazil until the nineteenth century, and Roman Catholicism was firmly established as an integral part of Brazilian identity. It was not until German Lutheran immigrants began to arrive in 1823 that Protestants became a permanent part of Brazil. In 1837, these immigrants established the first Protestant church on Brazilian soil in the city of Rio de Janeiro (MARC 1971:9). During a period of increased British imperial influence in Brazil, British subjects introduced Anglican worship in their expatriate community around Rio de Janeiro in the 1830's. Over the subsequent course of the nineteenth century, various North American Protestant denominations established missions that gained footholds among the Brazilians themselves. For instance, a Baptist presence was first established by Confederate immigrants in the state of São Paulo after they lost the North American Civil War. William Buck Bagby and his wife, Anne Luther Bagby, were the first Baptist missionaries to reach out to native Brazilians, arriving in 1881 (Pereira 1982:18).

Growing very slowly at first, the traditional Protestant groups solidified their presence and slowly began to shed their foreign identities in the early to middle years of



the twentieth century. After World War II, and particularly from the 1960s, Protestant growth exploded in Brazil, to the point that Brazil can no longer be considered a monolithic Roman Catholic country. In fact, if evangelical church growth rates from the years 1960-1985 were sustained for the next quarter century, from 1985-2010 (which does not appear to be the case), Brazil would be 57% Protestant (Stoll 1990:8-9).

This explosive growth, however, did not come primarily from the historical Protestant denominations, but from Pentecostal groups which arrived in the early years of the twentieth century. It is possible to identify three distinct waves in the history of Brazilian Pentecostalism. The first began in 1910 with the arrival of the Assemblies of God and the Christian Congregation (*Congregação Cristã*). This represents the moment of Pentecostal beginnings and initial expansion. The second wave occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s, and was spurred by the process of industrialization and the migration and urbanization that accompanied it. This second wave of Pentecostalism began in São Paulo, and was represented by groups like the Four-Square Church, Brazil for Christ, and God is Love. The third wave began in the late seventies and continues to the present. The personification of the movement is the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which began in Rio de Janeiro (Freston 1995:120, 126-129).

One reason that Pentecostal growth has been so much stronger than that of the historical denominations is the fact that the missionaries who brought historical Protestantism to Brazil had a goal not only to implant their religious beliefs, but to bring the gospel wrapped in elements of their home culture as well. “When Brazilians adapted one of the new Protestant religions, they rejected much of their native culture. They became more rational and less spontaneous and emotional” (Page 1995:373).

Pentecostals, on the other hand, did not seek openly to transplant a new culture to Brazil, but instead used a style of worship suited to the Brazilian temperament. They also trusted the work to national leadership at a much earlier stage than the historic Protestant groups. In 1930, the same year that Getúlio Vargas rode a wave of nationalist sentiment to power in Brazil, the Assembly of God in Brazil gained autonomy from the Swedish mission. All mission property and work was handed over to national leadership (Freston 1995:123). Also important in the explosive Pentecostal growth since the 1950's and 1960's was in the fact that they addressed concerns in the daily life of the members (Page 1995:375).

Another way in which Pentecostals fit better into the Brazilian worldview is in their concept of the supernatural. There is quite a bit of similarity between the Pentecostals at this point and popular Catholicism or spiritism. Commenting from the standpoint of the similarities between Pentecostals and the Afro-Brazilian religions, Page writes,

The relationship between Brazilian Pentecostalism and Afro-Brazilian religious beliefs is closer than one would imagine. Both share the same concept of the supernatural, except that for the Afro-Brazilians the *orixás* are deities, but for the Pentecostals they are Satanic spirits. The Pentecostals preach that the Holy Spirit is stronger than the *orixás*, and they advocate the use of exorcism for freeing believers in *candomblé* or *umbanda* from the spiritual entities that possess them. (Page 1995:381)

The basic Pentecostal affinity for traditional Brazilian worldview categories, but their differences over the nature and identity of the other-worldly beings revered in other traditions, has resulted in fairly widespread practices of exorcism among Pentecostal Christians. This practice is not nearly as common in the historical Protestant denominations, but Page identifies it as yet another factor in the explosive growth of

Pentecostal churches, and relates it to the Brazilian poor's search for healing (Page 1995:378). This search for healing is pervasive in poor communities, and illustrates the fact that for many Brazilians, the search for God is driven, not by the high theology questions of ultimate reality and meaning that characterize the historic denominations, but by their desperate desire for comfort and relief in the midst of suffering.

The evangelical witness appeals to Brazilians at the personal level of spiritual experience with the good news that persons can enter into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Pentecostal brand of evangelicalism, in particular, appeals to the mystical side of Brazilians through the experience of speaking in tongues, supernatural healings, and other miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Much of Protestant Christianity's explosive growth in Brazil came in the decades in which the Roman Catholic Church, through the influence of the theology of liberation and the Ecclesiastical Base Communities, was most active in attacking the structural evils of injustice and oppression. A Brazilian minister has noted in an interview with the *New York Times* the irony in the fact that "the Catholics opted for the poor, and the poor opted for the Evangelicals" (Page 1995:377). This reality testifies to the fact that Brazilian religiosity seeks after personal, mystical experiences of encounter with the divine.

Brazilian missiologist Luis Wesley de Sousa notes that with the appeal of mystical personal experience for Brazilians, evangelical faith in Brazil is very emotional—even mostly emotional (2004:personal interview). The enthusiastic, participatory, and often spontaneous style of Brazilian worship in evangelical circles stands as eloquent testimony to the truth of de Sousa's observation. This would hold true in the historical as well as the Pentecostal churches, although to a lesser degree.



Religion and Worldview. Roberto DaMatta says that “it is possible to ‘read’

Brazil from the point of view of the home, from the perspective of the street and from the angle of the other world. And more: these possibilities are institutionalized among us [Brazilians]” (2000:19). The domains of house and street will be discussed later in this chapter. Here, we will draw on DaMatta’s perspectives on the religious dimension of Brazilian reality as a way to summarize and tie together our exploration of the subject to this point.

DaMatta says that the Brazilian way of relating is different in dealing with the other world, as opposed to the world of house and street, using a method that is more formal and infused with supplication (1998:110). While the celebrations of Carnaval represent an inversion ritual, giving people at the bottom of the social hierarchy a chance to assume temporarily more prestigious roles (1997:169-178), “the religious rituals come from the churches and sacred places, intending to order the world with the values that are there articulated as the most basic. The world of God—represented by the Catholic Church and by the forms of religiosity related to it—is a universe where things are ordered in a clearly vertical manner” (1998:83).

As the official arbiter of religion throughout the history of Brazil, and the entity that still is recognized in most public forums, the Catholic Church certainly stands out as the institution that defines public religion in Brazil. It is important to point out, however, that in actuality both spiritist groups and evangelical expressions of Christianity exercise a powerful influence on Brazilian worldview among significant numbers of the population. Furthermore, one cannot speak of a monolithic Catholicism in Brazil, because it includes folk Catholicism, charismatic elements, and an ongoing influence



from liberation theology, as well as traditional Catholicism. Therefore, in trying to understand the influence of the “other worldly” domain in Brazilian culture, it is important to remember the wide diversity of faith in Brazil. But DaMatta is correct in pointing with a singular focus to the Catholic Church as the officially recognized embodiment of the other worldly domain in Brazilian culture (1998:83), representing the dimension of the other world and blessing ceremonies in the public domain, as well as specifying the holy days on the yearly calendar and leading the associated rituals.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of the hierarchical worldview in the Brazilian religious domain. “In fact, in our way of conceiving religious space, the vertical and hierarchical line, which relates heaven with earth and the above with the below, is something that is dominant and critical” (DaMatta 1998:110). The “above” is that which is superior, in nobility, strength and power; the “below” is the earth on which we live, with its tears, work, sufferings and death. The ways of linking the earthly to the infinite include formal prayer, religious festivities and propitiatory collective song (:110). According to what DaMatta calls “our dominant logic of gradation,” some forms of communication with the beyond are stronger than others, and those forms which involve the greater number of senses are probably stronger and more irresistible to the saints, gods and spirits they are intended to reach (:110-111). By the same token, collective approaches to God are considered to be stronger than individual ones. Better yet, “supplications accompanied by objects, in the form of promises, offerings and sacrifices, are naturally stronger than a simple verbal petition” (:111). These promises accompanied by offerings are considered to be a pact that obligates both parties, humans and beings from the beyond (:111). Another thing that Brazilians think helps them get their requests

is to make them in a very respectful, solemn and formal way. “In this way, the prayers and the petitions “rise” better when there is a visible sign of communication with the above,” which could include smoke from the incense or the lights of burning candles (:111).

In the Brazilian connection with the other world, a personal link of some kind is considered basic (DaMatta 1998:114). A saint often serves in the mind of Brazilians as a protector, or *patrón*. *Orixás* or other spirits also can serve as protectors (although in Afro-Brazilian religions, they can also be our tormentors). But in all cases, the relation that exists between the beyond and those who are of this earth is personal, founded on sympathy and loyalty.

In the same way that we have parents, wedding sponsors and superiors who protect us, we also have supernatural entities that protect us. And they can be from two apparently divergent religious traditions. This really isn't important. What for a North American Calvinist, an English Puritan or a French Catholic would be a sign of superstition and even of cynicism or ignorance, for us is a way to amplify our possibilities of protection....In this way, these religious experiences are all complementary between themselves, never mutually exclusive. (:115)

The singular thing in the Brazilian case, then, “is that every one of these forms of religiosity would be supplementary to the others, maintaining with them a relation of complete complementarity (:115).

DaMatta asks why we bother to speak with God, and responds that it is to derive a sense of oneness with the universe or to find an explication for unfortunate and tragic events that cause suffering (1998:111-112). Religion “offers responses to questions that, strictly, cannot be responded to with science or technology” (:112). Religion also serves to register important events in our lives like births, baptisms, christenings, communions,

weddings and funerals (:112). They usually require religious rites to dramatize them (:113). In short, “Religion is a way to organize the world” (:113).

While DaMatta is certainly correct in these observations as far as they go, it is significant to note that they come out of a high religion perspective. But in Brazil, these ultimate questions are not the most pressing ones being asked by the masses. We must remember, as indicated in the discussion above, that popular Catholicism, spiritism, and many popular forms of evangelicalism put their highest priority on finding in religious faith and practice the resources that people need to face the challenges of daily life.

In the Brazilian view of the other world, everything finally makes sense, and there is a final end to suffering, misery, power and inhumanity. According to what DaMatta calls the “law of eternal return”, the one who gives will receive, and the one who does evil will receive it back. Everyone will have value, based on the faith and sincerity of each (1998:118). “The other world has many forms and varied are the ways to arrive there in Brazil. But, behind all the differences, it is possible to have a perfect relationship in all spaces. This, at least, is the hope that is written on the most popular forms of religiosity...” (:118).

DaMatta describes a wide variety of religious experience in Brazil, including Roman Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian religions, and Kardecism. In the later two, contact with the gods is routine (1998:114), although in specific religions the emphasis will often be on either the gods or departed spirits, not both. The common denominator in Brazilian religion, says DaMatta, is the idea of relation and the possibility of communication with the beyond (:114). “In all the forms of Brazilian religiosity, there is an enormous and dense emphasis on the relation between this world and the other, so that the



domestication of death and of time is a fundamental element in all the various ways to arrive at God” (:114).

### Self

It might be tempting to think of Brazil as a colony of Portugal, settled (it is thought) by Portuguese immigrants and their descendants, and therefore an extension of Portugal in much the same way that the United States is an extension of England—larger, to be sure, and with some new historical, geographical and cultural influences, but still maintaining an identity and values closely tied to the mother country—a form of Western European culture transplanted to the American continent. But colonization from the Iberian Peninsula to the Americas was fundamentally different in various respects from the Northern European colonization in North America. The famous Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre put it this way in a work that reproduces some lectures he gave at Indiana University in 1944:

To Brazil, a country discovered and colonized by the Portuguese, is given at times the name Portuguese America. And with this name of Portuguese America it is generally considered an extension of Europe. . . .

But the truth is that neither these origins clearly Portuguese or Hispanic, nor her Latin-Catholic roots made of Brazil a pure and simple extension of Europe like New England, of Old England, or like New England, with its evangelical or Protestant Christianity that came to dominate North America. (2001:57)

Freyre goes on to add that Spain and Portugal were never orthodox European states in their experiences and characteristics in comparison with other European and Christian states. Rather, in many important respects, they appeared as a mixture of Europe and Africa, Christianity and Islam. This mixture was so prominent in their formation that there was a popular slogan among the Nordic peoples saying that, “Africa



begins in the Pyrenees”. During their eight-century domination of the Iberian Peninsula, Arabs and Moors “left traces of themselves” (2001:58) among the Spanish and Portuguese. The Iberian Peninsula thus became a “zone of transition” (:59) between two great cultures.

Darcy Ribeiro notes that “the Brazilian begins to rise and recognize himself more by the perception of strangeness that he provoked in the Lusitanian, than by his identification as a member of new social communities...” (1995:127). In fact, the first Brazilians began to recognize themselves in their differences with both the Portuguese and Indians, and to stake out their own place in the social hierarchy.

The first Brazilian conscious of himself was, perhaps, the *mameluco*, this brasilindian mestizo in the flesh and in the spirit, who, unable to identify himself with those who were his American ancestors—whom he despised—, nor with the Europeans—who despised him—..., he saw himself condemned to the pretension of being what he was not and what had not existed: the Brazilian. (:128)

The descendents of Africans brought to Brazil as slaves lived an even more tenuous existence as people without a homeland. “The brasilindian, as well as the Afro-Brazilian, existed in a no-man’s land, ethnically speaking, and it is out of this essential need, in order to free themselves from the nobodiness of non-Indians, non-Europeans and non-blacks, that they saw themselves forced to create their own ethnic identity: the Brazilian” (:131).

It is important to note that the hierarchical worldview expressed here deals not only with the stratification of rank within Brazilian society, but also fits Brazilians into their own perceived place among the peoples of the world. Notably, that position which they assign themselves is inferior to that of the European. In other words, Brazilians as a people struggle with an inferiority complex.

Roberto DaMatta addresses this reality in the preface to his book *Torre de Babel (Tower of Babel)*, a collection of anthropological essays he wrote in popular style for a Brazilian newspaper during the years 1993-1995. During this period, DaMatta was dividing his time between teaching at the University of Notre Dame and work in Brazil, and many of his essays analyze Brazilian culture by using North American culture as a point of comparison, and vice versa. But instead of doing so from an uncritical perspective holding up the United States as the model which Brazilians should pursue, he did so with the idea in mind of doing a critical evaluation of a “First World” society “that we so like to imitate and try to emulate, as if we didn’t have a history. Or better, as if our history were lacking something because we do not find in it the same events that form the cosmology of these nations” (DaMatta 1996:13-14). In other words, DaMatta wanted to show his fellow Brazilians that they could look at another society as well as their own, seeing positives and negatives in each without automatically disparaging their own culture on the basis of an artificial idealization of another.

This inferiority complex is part of the colonized mindset, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Recognizing that this sense of inferiority exists in no way implies that Brazilians actually are inferior; rather, it reflects the inevitable result of having been dominated by another people in a colonial situation

In *Masters and Slaves*, Gilberto Freyre sets forth the vision of the Brazilians as products of three races—Portuguese, Indian, and African—with each race making its own positive contributions to national culture and identity. DaMatta refers to the “fable of the three races”, which he describes as a Brazilian cultural invention that has little to

do with empirical history, but which is nevertheless a “fundamental point of ‘Brazilian national ideology’” (DaMatta 1995:272).

DaMatta goes on to discuss the different ways in which the USA and Brazil treat race. While the US was founded on “the ideology of the white element”, and the system rests on the hegemony of the whites and the exclusion of others, Brazil has the ideology of having been founded as an “encounter” of three races, each making its singular and equal contributions in an ideological triangle within a social system that operates on a logic of inclusion (1995:272-273). The fable or myth lies in the idealized retelling of the story of natural origins in a way that gives the impression of a false harmony that makes possible an idealized racial democracy.

Along the same line, DaMatta points out that “the *mestiço* (as a valued cultural category) is a fundamental aspect of Brazilian national ideology in contrast to the United States, where mixture and ambiguity are still highly negative elements” (DaMatta 1995:273). In Brazil, complementarity, inclusion and hierarchy are emphasized, while “an ideological pact hides or disguises differences” (:273).

Whereas DaMatta refers to the “fable” of the three races, Renato Ortiz believes that it is more accurate in anthropological terms to speak of the “myth” of the three races—a cosmological myth that describes the origin of the Brazilian state (Ortiz 1994:38). In the late nineteenth century, Brazilian intellectuals were accepting the European theories that explained the superiority of Western civilization in terms of race, and blamed their perceived national inferiority on the large black and mulatto population in Brazil. They saw the solution to the “problem” in whitening the population through miscegenation, augmented by facilitating European immigration (Page 1995:69). As



Brazil entered a new period in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the end of slavery, the founding of the republic, urbanization and industrialization, and the development of a middle class, Brazil needed a new paradigm for self-interpretation. This was especially true beginning in the thirties, as Getúlio Vargas took dictatorial power and instituted the *Estado Novo* (“New State”). According to Ortiz, Gilberto Freyre’s classic work, *The Masters and the Slaves*, offered the kind of reinterpretation of itself that Brazil was looking for. Freyre makes the racial theme a key for understanding Brazil.

What is new in Freyre is that he takes what previously was considered a negative—the large number of blacks and mulattos—and makes it a positive. In the process, one source of the Brazilian inferiority complex is undermined, at least in theory, and the myth of the three races becomes a national given, forming a basis for the idea of a “racial democracy” (Ortiz 1994:39-41). Racial democracy has been called a myth, including by the Afro-Brazilian led Affirmative Action Movement, but it still has an influence on Brazilians today (Birman 2000:146).

What was really groundbreaking and relevant in Freyre was making miscegenation the theme of Brazilian culture. *The Masters and the Slaves* “makes possible the unequivocal affirmation that still debated the ambiguities of its own definition. He [Freyre] transforms it into a national uniqueness. In reworking the problematic issue of Brazilian culture, Gilberto Freyre offers to the Brazilian a national identity card” (Ortiz 1994:42).

The vision of a racial democracy where the different ethnic elements mingle and mix in harmony still has its appeal in many circles. Joãozinho Trinta is one influential voice in Brazilian culture that buys into the vision of the mixture of races in Brazil as the



predominate theme and lasting contribution of Brazil to humanity. Trinta is best known for his work preparing samba schools for the annual Carnaval Festival parades in Rio de Janeiro. He holds that Brazil is forming, if it hasn't been accomplished already, what he calls the "synthetic" race, a people with mixed bloodlines from East to West, and a race that has in its background all the accomplishments of the human race. This is in contrast to the developed countries, where within each defined people group, everything and everyone is the same. But in Brazil, no one looks like anyone else. Instead of being a monolithic block, Brazil is like a samba school, rich in variety. This, he says, is true not only of physical appearance, but also is true in terms of values, gestures and accomplishments. This makes Brazilians something new on the earth, a new being. (Trinta 2000:136-137).

It is easy to observe that on the institutional level, including especially government and religion, Brazil consciously follows a European model, modified to fit the Brazilian reality. One may observe as well that among the many contributions made by Africans to Brazilian life and culture was its spiritual worldview. But while it has been demonstrated that indigenous religion interacted extensively with both popular Catholicism and with the African religions, it remains to consider specific indigenous contributions to Brazilian culture that are relevant to crosscultural mission training. Here, special attention will be drawn to two.

First, Page traces to the indigenous tribes one of the more noteworthy Brazilian characteristics. "The aborigines' love of freedom and abhorrence of regimentation burn in the soul of modern Brazilians. Their wanderlust is also visible today in the internal migrations that continue to shape and reshape Brazilian society" (1995:91). Combining

this with the spirit of adventure so evident in the Portuguese exploratory maritime voyages and vigorous pursuit of trade opportunities across the globe, we see that Brazilians come honestly by their attraction for the exciting, adventurous and new.

Secondly, Darcy Ribeiro emphasizes the indigenous social institution of *cunhadismo* as that which made possible the formation of the Brazilian people. The word is a derivative of *cunhado*, or brother-in-law, and describes the extensive system of social relationships made available to the Portuguese upon marrying an Indian woman. These marriages not only opened up to the Portuguese numbers of potential sexual partners within the kinship group, but also gave them access to an extended family group that they could put at their service. Through *cunhadismo*, then, the Portuguese had opportunities to multiply the non-Indian population through the offspring of their Indian wives and female relatives, as well as to expand the economic prosperity of the colony by taking advantage of the Indians' willingness to work in order to help someone who had married into their clan (Ribeiro 1995:81-83). What strikes me about this practice, however, is the degree of similarity between it and how *parentela* functions as a *de facto* extension of the family today, and the mutual obligations that exist between members of one of these groups. The concept of *parentela* is discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Here it is sufficient, therefore, simply to note the possible connection with indigenous culture.

### Knowing

As seen above in developing the Brazilian view of themselves and their place in the world, Brazilians derive originally from the three racial stocks of Portuguese, indigenous tribes, and imported African slaves. Subsequent waves of immigrants have made significant contributions to the ethnic pool and larger culture throughout Brazil's

history. However, from the very beginning, the miscegenation that was part of the colonizing practices produced a new type of human being, incorporating different ethnic stocks and various cultural influences in a unique way that resulted in a new people—the Brazilians. In the introduction to his seminal work, *The Brazilian People*, Darcy Ribeiro links this process of physical miscegenation to its religious, cultural and intellectual equivalent—syncretism (1995:19).

Syncretism is perhaps the quintessential Brazilian way of coming to grips with the issue of truth. Its roots in Brazilian culture extend beyond the physical and cultural miscegenation in the colonial process to the historical experiences that shaped the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula. While there was sharp conflict over the centuries between its Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim inhabitants, Gilberto Freyre suggests that “the general result of the long contact of the Spanish and Portuguese with the Arabs, Moors and Jews was more than anything else an integration, or equilibrium, of antagonistic elements” in the disparate cultures and belief systems (2001:63).

Just as three primary religious forces shaped the faith and worldview of the people of the Iberian Peninsula, Brazilian spirituality is composed historically by three different traditions: Christianity, indigenous religions, and Afro-Brazilian religions. As noted above, elements of native religion have been diffused into the general culture, but practice of the religions as such is common only among some indigenous tribes. For most Brazilians, syncretism is an instinctive reaction to differing belief systems, and they would see it as a positive aspect of their culture.

Syncretism, in its positive sense, as a creative amalgam of elements from many religious origins, possibly will be the hegemonic religion of Brazilians. The Brazilian people are not fundamentalist and intolerant. To the contrary, tolerance, respect and a recognition of the value of all religious and spiritual expressions



characterize the Brazilian soul. *The people believe firmly that God is in all religions* and that these serve, fundamentally, to nurture in us the sacred and living flame of the Divine. (Boff 2000a:193-194, italics mine)

To emphasize the point from a little different perspective, Boff says that “we are not closed and dogmatic, but naturally open and ecumenical in the conviction that all religions contain a basic goodness, coming from God and conducting [people] to the heart of God” (2000b:117).

Brazilians as a whole are multiconfessional in the sense of feeling no discomfort in having multiple religious memberships (Boff 2000a:194). DaMatta presents us with an excellent representation of a typical Brazilian attitude toward religion:

On the way to God and in relation with the other world, I can put together many things. On this way, I can be a Catholic and an *umbandista* [member of the spiritist group *umbanda*, described above], a devotee of Ogum [an African spirit] and of St. George. I can put together, add up, and relate things that traditionally and officially the authorities present as different in the extreme. Everything here is put together and becomes syncretistic, revealing perhaps that, in the supernatural, nothing is impossible. (DaMatta 1998:117)

To someone from the West, especially evangelical missionaries trained in theology but lacking an equally solid foundation in anthropological understanding, the unabashed syncretism of wildly different religious systems is not only false, but so illogical as to seem utterly ridiculous. Of course, it is easy to ridicule that which one does not understand. There is a cultural logic behind Brazilian syncretism, which is important to understand if one is to understand Brazil. Boff points the way toward this logic when he writes, “The religious language of our country is, therefore, a language of relation and tying together. It is a language that seeks the middle ground, the middle of the way, the possibility of saving the whole world and in every locale to find something good and worthy” (Boff 2000a:194).

In and behind syncretism, we can discern another pervasive cultural trait that is perhaps not as obvious, but which nevertheless forms the foundation for the practice of syncretism. This is the Brazilian practice of “*juntando*.” The word comes from the verb *juntar*, which means “to join” or “to put together.” The important thing in Brazil is not to prioritize one apparent opposite over another, but to recognize their connection and relation to one another. In other words, we must understand Brazil as a “relational society” (DaMatta 2000:25), not only in the dimension of personal relationships, but also in relating different social domains one to another, as well as in finding a way to reconcile and relate apparently contradictory ideas or truth claims. In searching for and defining what is true, Brazilians have the overwhelming tendency to find truth, not on one or the other opposite pole, but somewhere in the middle. The secret to interpreting Brazil is in knowing the connection between seemingly dissimilar things: “the Brazilian style defines itself beginning with an ‘&’” (2000:25). As DaMatta puts it, “We must think of Brazilian society as a process of mediation between poles and not, as has been the practice, construe our reality as having but a ‘dualistic rationale.’ We have been using an individualized epistemology to study a reality that functions relationally” (1995:281).

When relationships are more important than ideology, as is the case in Brazilian culture, ambiguity can be not only tolerated, but celebrated. Social relations “are the salt of life and also the pivot for a real sociology of Brazil” (DaMatta 1995:283). And, one might add, seeing relationships between seemingly dissimilar ideas is the key to understanding Brazilian epistemology. “This relational culture meshes with everything

that we said before: the basic structure of the universe is the relation of everything with everything..." (Boff 2000b:113).

In his runaway bestselling book, *A águia e a galinha: Uma metáfora da condição humana* (*The Eagle and the Chicken: A Metaphor for the Human Condition*), the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff provides a clear example of the tendency to *juntar*, which DaMatta theorizes is such an essential characteristic of Brazilianness. Boff writes, "*Complexity* is one of the most visible characteristics of the reality that surrounds us. . . Everything is in relation with everything. Nothing is isolated. . ." (2003:72). Boff claims that with the advent of modern science, everything was reduced in Western culture from the complex to the simple: "Scientists compartmentalized and isolated everything. They did not consider relevant the relationships in every direction..." (2003:72-73). Boff posits that opposites form a duality, rather than a dualism. Dualism sees pairs as "juxtaposed realities, without relation between them", while duality sees pairs "as two sides of the same body. Duality "puts *and* where dualism puts *or*" (2003:74-75).

The both/and kind of reasoning which DaMatta describes and which Boff advocates is typical of a high-context culture such as Brazil, which exhibits most of the high-context characteristics (see Appendix 4; this concept and its implications for missionary training will be discussed further in Chapter 5). The Brazilian approach stands in stark contrast to that which is most common in North America. Edward T. Hall gives an example of our North American dualism from the field of psychology. "It is typical of our [North American] culture," he writes, "that we have no way of reconciling or including in one frame of reference such divergent views as Freudian psychoanalysis



and Skinnerian environmental determinism. We act as though one *or* the other had to be right, when in fact both work and are relevant when placed in proper perspective” (1989:126).

Culturally, Brazilians demonstrate this tendency to think that truth and virtue are “in the middle.” We can trace the root causes of this cultural characteristic back past the period of colonization in South America to the long Muslim occupation which made the Iberian Peninsula a “zone of transition” between Europe and Africa, as described above. Freyre attributes to conflict generated during this period of cultural fusion national characteristics such as accommodation, assimilation, and a “duplicity of the soul” that makes it possible “not only to tolerate contradictions but to harmonize them” (2001:60).

Edward T. Hall’s concept of high- and low-context cultures offers other insights into cultural ways of knowing, learning and relating that are significant for culturally sensitive missionary training. “*Context* is the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event. The elements that combine to produce a given meaning—events and context—are in different proportions depending on the culture. The cultures of the world can be compared on a scale from high to low context” (Hall and Hall 1990:6). In a high-context culture, a communicator may assume that the hearer has a high degree of background information, while in a low-context culture, the communicator must assume that the hearer knows little and must be told practically everything (Hall and Hall:183-184). High-context people depend on extensive networks for sharing information; low-context individuals are compartmentalized, not well informed outside their area of expertise, and can suffer from

information overload if their channels of communication become blocked with too many messages (Hall and Hall:180).

The differences between people from high- and low-context cultures “can affect virtually every situation and every relationship in which the members of these two opposite traditions find themselves” (Hall and Hall 1990:7). What kinds of dynamics might we expect when people from high- and low-context cultures interact? One of the primary things to be affected is communication. “The level of context determines everything about the nature of the communication and is the foundation on which all subsequent behavior rests” (Hall 1989:92).

Faulty communication due to a lack of understanding the differences between high- and low-context cultures can lead to conflict within an international group, and often the people involved will have a hard time getting to the root of the problem so it can be dealt with. “High-context people are apt to become impatient and irritated when low-context people insist on giving them information they don't need. Conversely, low-context people are at a loss when high-context people do not provide *enough* information. One of the great communications challenges in life is to find the appropriate level of contexting needed in each situation” (Hall and Hall 1990:9).

Additionally, Hall tells us that in high-context systems, “people in places of authority are personally and truly (not just in theory) responsible for the actions of subordinates down to the lowest man. In LC (low-context) systems, responsibility is diffused throughout the system and difficult to pin down” (Hall 1989:113). Clearly, the difference in perspectives concerning what leadership entails, what its responsibilities are, and what expectations and demands are appropriate are issues that have potential for

creating dynamics ripe with possibilities for cultural misunderstanding in settings that combine people from high- and low-context cultures. Logically, if leaders in high-context cultures are considered responsible for the actions of those under them, it stands to reason that leaders will want a higher degree of control over those actions.

### Community

It is important to understand social dynamics in any culture. In Brazil, two dynamic elements of community life help to shape Brazilian culture in unique and highly significant ways. One is the interplay between the domains of home and street; the other is the Brazilian practice of *jeito*.

Home and Street. Brazil is a relational society. Relationships are key to navigating one's way within society in every social domain. The most important relationships, however, are those closest to home, within the family and with one's network of friendships.

"Family" is more than a category of Brazilian culture; it is a basic value close to the heart of every Brazilian. At its core, of course, are those with whom one shares flesh and blood, although the concept of family is extended to include others, as will be seen below. The physical relationship of families that share the same flesh and blood is projected outward to include other elements the family has in common, including a common destiny, and shared objects, relationships, and values (often called family traditions) which all members of the group know that it is important to keep.

"Traditions" may refer to certain symbols that distinguish the home, as well as non-physical values such as "honor" and "shame" (DaMatta 1998:24). The value of family is



associated intimately with these other important values, and the respect, honor, or shame earned by any individual in the family accrues to all of its members.

Well-defined families with a high sense of home and group may be considered a “moral person” within society, acting as one among other such groups. They act in defense of their physical possessions, as well as in defense of weaker members of the group, such as children, women, and servants (DaMatta 1998:24). This is one aspect of domestic life that has significant implications for the public domain. In the area of economics, for example, family groups control 280 of the largest 300 domestic firms in Brazil, a “relic of the colonial past” (Page 1995:149). Similarly, it is common in the political arena to see both local and national politicians grooming their sons, and sometimes daughters, to follow in their steps.

Still, it is the affective dimension of the family that is most important. At home, Brazilians are fulfilled as human beings. “At home, we are unique and irreplaceable” (DaMatta 1998:25).

Of course, North Americans value family as well. There is one outstanding difference, however, in the Brazilian concept of family. North American families are essentially collections of individuals. Children are raised to leave the nest, establish their own identity, and make their own way in the world. In Brazil, one’s identity will always be tied in with that of the family. Leaving the nest to establish one’s own residence is rare before marriage, which in Brazilian middle- and upper-class families is often put off until the late 20’s. Even after marriage, it is perfectly acceptable for a couple to stay in the home of either the bride or groom’s parents while they go about establishing themselves. And “making one’s own way in the world” is never part of the Brazilian

agenda, at least not in the North American sense. Emotional ties are strong within Brazilian families, and so is the sense of duty and responsibility that members feel toward one another.

Familial love is extended to include close friends, who are always welcome in our homes and at our tables (Da Matta 1998:26). And with that comes another of the seeming contradictions within Brazilian culture: family is an exclusive concept, yet at the same time it is extended to include others, who as relatives or friends are welcome in the home without question or reservation. I remember my friend Schubert, who came from a humble background but has done very well in his profession as a medical doctor. As he was building a new home and I was preparing to move to another city, he made a point not only to take me to his new house so I would know how to find it, but he took me to a particular part of the house under construction, described in detail how it would be finished, and told me, “When you come to visit, this is where you will stay.” He was telling me that I was a part of that intimate circle of friends that would always have a place under his roof.

One’s family is extended through the social category of *parentela*, “an extended family structure on which social influence is based” (DaMatta 1995:287). *Parentela* is “a fundamental characteristic of Brazilian life” (Schneider 1995:193) that goes a long way in helping one figure out how things work, so much so that it has been described as the “most important single institution in Brazil” (Schneider 1995:193, citing Wagley 1963:167-185). In this kinship group, one’s close friends and associates form a network of mutual support that not only operates much like an extended family, but demands similar loyalty as well. A request from a friend cannot be denied if it is in one’s power to

help. DaMatta cites a famous Brazilian dictum attributed to the Marquis of Paraná de Nunes Machado: “I am capable of any sort of courageous act except saying no to my friends!” (1995:276).

Joseph Page, remembering the historical legacy of the Muslim domination of the Iberian peninsula for several centuries, sees Moorish contributions to the Brazilian family in “certain distinctively Oriental aspects of Portuguese society” (1995:42f). One such aspect that he identifies is a fondness for display. One may observe this, for example, in the lavish parties thrown by Brazilians of even modest means on special occasions, such as weddings and the fifteenth birthday party for girls, which is a social “coming out” roughly equivalent to a debutante ball.

Another Moorish influence identified by Page is *de facto* polygamy. Since the time of the earliest colonization, Portuguese colonists of all types mixed freely with numbers of native women (cf. Gilberto Freyre, *Masters & Slaves*, and Darcy Ribeiro, *The Brazilian People*). Masters of plantations, along with their sons, helped themselves to the women of the slave population. According to the picture drawn of colonial times, polygamy was practically universal. That historical influence can be perceived today in the attitudes toward extra-marital sex in Brazilian society as a whole, including among evangelicals. Due to deeply ingrained cultural attitudes and values, it is no exaggeration to say that, in some evangelical circles at least, one might be met with more understanding and forgiveness for committing adultery than for smoking a cigarette or drinking a beer at the corner bar. What is surprising, and certainly against the grain of the cultural tradition, is that in recent years women have begun to catch up rapidly with men in extramarital sexual activity.



Page attributes to Moorish influence a third characteristic of Brazilian home life, which is an excessively patriarchal hierarchy. In the rural areas of Brazil during the colonial period, the patriarchal family was organized along the classical lines that had been typical of Iberia for centuries. Slaves and all associated with the plantation were considered part of the family circle, under the immense authority of the *pater-família* (Holanda 1995:81). Such influences still prevail in rural Brazil, sometimes to a surprising degree. I remember traveling to the interior of the state of Espírito Santo with a group of university students on a mission project. At the end of the day, the pastor of the small rural church where we were working invited us to his home for dinner. To our surprise, he insisted that he and I, along with the young men in our group, eat first while his wife served us and the female students waited to eat only after the men were finished.

A fourth Moorish influence on the Brazilian family, according to Page, is the domestic seclusion of women. This was undoubtedly practiced in earlier Brazilian history. DaMatta, for example, quotes from a work by the Frenchman Auguste Saint-Hilaire about his stay in Brazil from 1816-1822, in which Saint-Hilaire noted that the kitchens and back yards (literally, gardens) of homes were the domains of women, and that the gardens were a weak compensation for their domestic captivity (DaMatta 2000:51-52). Today, while there are many who consider the home to be a much more appropriate domain for women than the workplace, I have not encountered anything in Brazil like domestic seclusion as I have seen it practiced in the Muslim world. That is not to say that these practices no longer exist in Brazil, particularly in remote rural areas. What is still more common, however, is a male sense of protectionism toward his wife, daughters, mother and sisters.

It is not much of an exaggeration to say that for a Brazilian, relationships are everything. They are so important that, “To a high degree, a person in Brazil is more important for his relationships and ties than for himself” (Schneider 1996:193). Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta utilizes his professional training while at the same time providing a window into his soul when he writes, “I know, then, that I am Brazilian and not North American, because...I am loyal to my friends and nothing can make me deny my family; because, finally, I know that I have personal relations that do not permit me to walk alone in this world, like my American friends do, who always see themselves and exist as individuals!” (Da Matta 1984:16-17).

It is possible to take Schnieder’s observation, cited in the paragraph above, one step further. In Brazil, one’s social identity is built on the basis of relationships, one by one. Your importance and power derive, not (at least directly) from your qualities as a person or from your intrinsic value as a human being, but from your relationships. In Brazil, without relationships, you become a “*João Ninguém*,” a John Nobody. You become an “individual” rather than a person, something less than fully human, susceptible to exploitation and abuse. More on the distinction between persons and individuals follows below.

Awareness of the central role of family, the importance of friendship, and the kinship groups that grow out of these relationships, leads to an important concept in Brazilian anthropology, the distinction between *casa* and *rua*, home and street. These social domains exist in tension, and may provide a significant key to discovering how Brazilian culture works from a Brazilian perspective. The chief proponent of this concept

is Roberto DaMatta, and it is to his writings that we will turn to explore some of the main ideas.

DaMatta sees home and street as two fundamental sociological categories for a comprehensive understanding of Brazilian society. He writes, “We will not advance toward significant understanding of Brazilian and Latin American reality if we do not discover the deep relations between the impersonal commands of law (conceived as a function of ‘individuals’) and ‘friends’ (a universe governed by the implicit and personalized rules of *parentela*) (1995:276). He addresses the issue succinctly in addressing a primarily North American readership:

Everyone knows that in Brazil (as throughout Latin America) everything is “out of place.” But why wouldn’t it be? And what logic presides over this apparently prelogical untidiness? This is precisely the question that nobody asks! And for this reason the Brazilian tradition and the institutional framework it legitimates becomes such a tremendous mystery. Nonetheless, the puzzle begins to make sense when one reflects about the place of favor, of patronage, and of personal relations in the Brazilian social system, contrasting their importance with their role in liberalism. One then discovers what was tacitly known, that the personal relations and impersonal rules on which liberalism is based exist side by side in mutually exclusive, although complementary, social spheres.

In Brazil, liberalism is a matter for government and the world of economics—metaphorically, the universe of the street—while the ideology and values of favor and patronage in general function in the universe represented by the metaphor of the home. Not only does each set of values carry different weight, but they move in very different spheres. (1995:274-275)

Using the concept in the classical sense of Durkheim and Mauss, DaMatta works with these categories or domains as a concept that will help one make sense of what a society thinks, what its values and cosmology are, and as an instrument to translate a society’s behavior (2000:14). Therefore, home and street are more than physical spaces in Brazil; they constitute moral entities, spheres of social action, ethical provinces, and



cultural dominions capable of eliciting emotions, reactions, laws, music, and images (2000:15). “There exists,” DaMatta writes, “a clear division between two fundamental social spaces that divide Brazilian social life: the world of the home and the world of the street—where, theoretically, there is work, movement, surprise and temptation” (1998:23).

The opposition of home and street is basic to Brazilian culture, separating two social dominions that are mutually exclusive and in basic conflict (DaMatta 1997:90, 91). The category *street* basically denotes the world, characterized by the unknown, by work, struggle, deception, dirty tricks, and individualization (1997:91; 1998:28; 2000:55); it is “the zone where everyone must watch out for themselves, while God looks out for everyone” (2000:55). In other words, it is a place where you must be constantly on your guard, and where you can’t afford to trust anyone.

On the other hand, Brazilians have a perception of the *home* as a unique, exclusive space (DaMatta 1998:26). As such, “the home extends itself in a complex and fascinating complex of symbols that are part of the Brazilian cosmology” (1998:27). It is a place where harmony should reign, crowding out the confusion, competition and disorder that characterize the street. In the home, nothing can be bought, sold or exchanged. Political discussions, which reveal individual differences within the family, are banned from the table and intimate areas of the house, especially the bedrooms. If they must occur, they are relegated to the veranda or the backyard, space that exists as a border between the home and the street (1998:27-28).

One crosses from the domain of the street to the domain of the home, especially the home of a friend, with norms of reception that mark the passage. The one entering

will always say, “*Da licença*”, which in this instance means, “With your permission.”

Those receiving guests will always reply, “*Fique a vontade*”, or, “Be at ease. Make yourself at home.” If it is the first time to visit, the visitor will always bring some small gift. Those receiving the visitor will always obey some rules of etiquette demonstrating care in hospitality. These rules change little in essence as one moves from one social class to another. Together, these norms of behavior serve as a ritual marking the passage into the domain of the home and the celebration of accepting one another on a deeper level of intimacy (DaMatta 2000:11).

Every modern society has both home and street, but the home has a special significance in Brazilian culture. In Brazil, the home is a world apart, a “universe where time is not historic but cyclical, time which lives on durations that are not measured by clocks, but by yellowed photographs.... [and] by the deaths of the oldest and the baptisms of the youngest” (DaMatta 2000:28).

Home and street are not terms that can be defined and understood in isolation, but by means of contrast and complementarity, constituting a basic pair in opposition one to the other in Brazilian social discourse (DaMatta 2000:16). “In any case, if the home distinguishes this space of calm, rest, recuperation and hospitality, that is, of everything that defines our idea of ‘love’, ‘tender loving care’ and ‘human warmth’, the street is the space defined precisely the opposite. It is a land that pertains to the ‘government’ or to ‘the people’....The street is a dangerous place” (2000:57).

The street is also a place of hurry, which contrasts with the tranquility of the home (DaMatta 1998:23). The street is a place where there is always the movement of an indistinguishable mass. At home, we have people, “our people”. On the street, there are

anonymous individuals in a negative space of exploitation, battle, and struggle.

Theoretically, according to this model, one should not expect to find on the street neither love, consideration, respect, nor friendship.

The street is a place of danger and insecurity. That danger and insecurity is illustrated vividly in the tragic story of something that happened near my own neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro just a couple of years ago. A young adolescent girl was being allowed by her parents to go out onto the street by herself for the first time. She was to leave her apartment, walk the short distance to the subway station, and travel one stop to meet her mother. At the exact moment in which she was descending the stairs into the subway, a man tried to rob a teller at one of the ticket booths below. An off-duty police officer saw what was happening and tried to stop the robber. In the ensuing shootout, one of the stray bullets hit and killed the girl. The train service was held up and the mother, already waiting at the station, heard that there had been a shooting at the next stop up. She called her husband in a panic, asking him to find their daughter. When he got to the station, his daughter's body already had been taken away, but he knew she had been the one hit when he found her eyeglasses lying on the stairs. Especially for Brazilians living in large urban areas, this story epitomizes the dangers *lá fora*, out there on the street, outside the security of home and family. Tragically, it is a story repeated over and over again.

Another important dimension to the home/street dichotomy is the corresponding dichotomy between persons and individuals. Using the work of Louis Dumont and Roberto DaMatta as a foundation, Livia Barbosa summarizes the meaning of these categories, which are rooted in some of the basic differences between modern and



traditional societies. Modern (Western) society “has as its main characteristic the notion of the individual as a social creation around whom the whole social universe is built” (1995:42). The values of freedom and equality are the hallmark of these societies. In traditional societies, by way of contrast, societies are organized on the basis of hierarchy. “The ideas of complementarity and difference are the basis of the whole social order. Society is pervaded by a holistic perspective” (1995:42). In these societies, relationships are the primary value.

In a modern, egalitarian society, the most important social actor is the individual, who acts within a context of universal, impersonal rules and voluntary associations. The individual is defined by performance. In a traditional society, the most important social actor is the person, who is defined by his or her place in the social network. There, one is not defined by performance, but by one’s place in the social hierarchy. The worldview is relational (Barbosa 1995:42-43). In DaMatta’s evaluation, “We are more fascinated by “persons” with their client networks than by ‘individuals’ who obey the laws” (DaMatta 1996:52). This traditional hierarchy of “persons” who are above the law is the root of the national crisis. To be “someone” grants immunity from the law. This is the aristocratic ideal that undermines democracy (1996:52).

In the Brazilian culture, DaMatta sees the domain of the street corresponding not only to the impersonal, egalitarian world of the individual, but also to the realities of government and economics (1995:274). It is the area dominated by the code of the written law. The home, which represents the hierarchical world where the person is valued and always has a place within a network of caring relationships, also fosters the values of favor and patronage (1995:274).

These domains each carry different values, and move in different spheres

(DaMatta 1995:274-275). In consequence, it is common to behave very differently in moving from one social domain to the other. What is acceptable behavior in one area may not be in another. For example, a man might be very progressive and bold in talking about sexual morals when on the street, but espouse extremely conservative positions on the subjects at home in front of his wife and daughters (2000:46).

Although there are many Brazilians that say the same thing in every social space, the norm—what is expected and legitimized—is that home, street and the other world strongly mark off changes in attitudes, gestures, clothing, subjects, social role and means of evaluating existence in all members of our society. The expected behavior is not one singular conduct in the three spaces, but differentiated according to the point of view of each one of these spheres of significance. In this perspective, the differentiations that may be encountered are complementary, never exclusive or parallel. Rather than being alternatives, with one code dominating and excluding the other like an absolute, hegemonic ethic, we face complementary codifications, which always makes reality to be seen as partial and incomplete. It is because of this that we also like to say, in Brazil, that “everything has another side.” (2000:48)

How does one know what space he or she is in and what ethical system prevails at the moment? DaMatta suggests that the dominant discourse in society is that of the street. However, most people in subordinate positions use the language of the home, with moral implications and an appeal to the moral limits of social exploitation. Meanwhile, priests use a language of renunciation (2000:21-22).

In reality, however, the boundaries between different social domains and the ethical systems associated with each domain are as clearly defined and respected as DaMatta seems to suggest. Many Brazilians see the infiltration of one set of ethics into other spheres as a major problem of Brazilian society:

One of the chronic deficiencies of the Brazilian Republic has been the promiscuity between the public and the private, with the private interests of public men generally prevailing over the common good. For the majority of Brazilians,

corruption and clientism are seen now as inherent elements of politics, and unhealthy. (Couto 2000:24)

DaMatta, writing as a Brazilian anthropologist, associates the domain of the home with relationships, and with the protection that comes in Brazilian culture from being “connected.” The street, however, is a place where you do not dare to mess with authority, because you always run the danger of being seen as a “nobody,” someone without connections, instead of a “somebody.” That is a frightening proposition, because “between being someone and no one there is a world of difference in the case of Brazil” (1998:31).

It is significant that a Brazilian would see this danger in the domain of the street. The danger that DaMatta portrays on the street is not what a North American might expect—the fear of crime or random violence. Instead, DaMatta expresses a fear of the authorities. Such a thought would not cross the minds of most North Americans, who feel protected by their constitutional rights and the laws of the land. But for a Brazilian, protection and security come, not from the law, but from personal connections. On the street, where one is in the domain of the authorities, the Brazilian feels vulnerable. DaMatta says what Brazilians intuitively sense when he writes that on the street, “we are almost always mistreated by the so-called ‘authorities’ and we have neither peace nor voice” (2000:20).

DaMatta posits that Brazilians construct conceptual triangles, making three out of two, and thus creating a middle space of complementary, rather than opposite, categories (2000:26). He compares the triangle of street, home and other world to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity because, citing an extremely common saying, God is Brazilian. His explanation of the analogy is revealing on the level of Brazilian spiritual worldview



when he compares the Father to the street, the place of impersonal laws; the Son to the home with its warm relationships and humanity, and the Holy Spirit as the relation between the other two, the “‘other side’ of the mystery” (2000:26). The virtue, he says, is in the middle, always avoiding the extremes of any pairing.

DaMatta’s writings develop a picture of the Brazilian universe, then, that includes three primary domains: the house, the street, and the other world. Each of these domains takes advantage of certain rituals through the course of the year. Carnaval celebrates the happiness, equality and disorder of an inversion ritual, and represents in the Brazilian culture the domain of the home (see DaMatta 2000:99). This is not because Carnaval is celebrated in the home—it is not—but because many of the values it celebrates (with the exception of the immorality associated with Carnaval) represent the domain of the home. The street, in DaMatta’s scheme, is represented in the festivals of order, associated with the government and supremely exemplified by the military parades and other activities surrounding the Day of the Fatherland, which celebrates Brazilian independence from Portugal. Religious rites represent the other world. These include saints’ days, which often are civic holidays, and processions, especially those that occur during Holy Week. For DaMatta, these religious rituals represent a legal order that is outside this world, “destined to help us leave society gloriously, with all its brief pleasures” (2000:99).

The result of all this is “*a ritual triangle*, a social configuration founded on three ritual moments that would be, in fact, privileged means by which the Brazilian universe may be perceived and dramatized for us Brazilians. We would have then the rites of order, of disorder and the ‘neutral’ ceremonies of religion” (DaMatta 2000:99). But according to DaMatta, these domains and their corresponding rites stand for three

different, distinct, yet simultaneous ethical systems that are absolutely equal in everyday Brazilian life.

Another way to understand the dynamic between the dominion of the home, centered on relationships constructed within an hierarchical structure, and the dominion of the street, centered in the principle of equality and competition among individuals, is to see it against the backdrop of the rural-urban continuum. Urbanization, understood not only as the physical growth of cities but also as the extension of the city's influence into rural areas due to increasingly effective means of communication, brings with it an increased influence of the values of the street. The shock produced by the collision of these two systems, according to Holanda, produces social disequilibrium (1995:145). Writing in the 1930's, Holanda observed that the effects of that disequilibrium remained in effect in his day. Seventy years later, due especially to the extensive urban migration within Brazil that snowballed after World War II, one could still make the same observation.

What should we make, then, of DaMatta's assertion that the Brazilian way is to find the middle ground between what seem to be polar opposites, finding a way to incorporate both in a harmonious whole? That Brazilians accept and operate in accordance with the different values and behavior expected in different domains, there can be little question. However, liberal ideals associated with the street and with urban realities are essentially an import from the West. Brazil is working toward a Brazilian solution to the existence of equal but fundamentally different values and worldview. The process is not complete; the interplay and relationship between the two domains is still

not worked out. The rules and the bridges between the two domains are not yet universally recognized and followed.

Jeito. It is impossible to speak of the importance of one's network of family and friends in Brazil without considering a related concept that is one of the most outstanding features of Brazilian culture. This is the practice of *jeito*, or, in its diminutive form, *jeitinho*—a “national institution dedicated to personalism” (Hess and DaMatta 1995:31). *Jeitinho* refers to a way of doing things, but is such a part of Brazilian culture and identity that it is often referred to with the affectionate diminutive form together with the adjective “Brazilian”, *o jeitinho brasileiro*, setting it apart as something uniquely theirs. “The *jeitinho* is predominately linked to a specific way of asking for things in the context of a social drama, and *jeitinho brasileiro* always refers to a way of defining Brazil as a nation and Brazilians as a people” (Barbosa 1995:36).

There have been a number of studies done on *jeito* and its origins. Some speculate that it originated in Portugal, for example in response to corruption of the Portuguese courts or to Catholic dogmatism. Barbosa, however, asserts that *jeito* “only has a significant function when exceptions disappear from the legal system and it acquires a universalizing façade while social practice continues to legitimize different treatment of men between themselves and before the law” (1992:16). Colonial Brazil, with its social hierarchy able to reserve for itself special rights and privileges, certainly fits this description. Another theory which seems to hold validity is the idea that *jeito* is a method to survive stages of economic and social lack of development that progress eventually will remedy. Certainly, Brazilians cope with these common characteristics of post-colonialism with a creativity born of desperation.



*Jeito* is used so pervasively, and in such a wide range of circumstances, that a variety of definitions are helpful in an effort to get a full grasp of its meaning. But mere attempts at defining *jeito* will come up short; it must be experienced to understand its nuances. “It impossible to define *jeito* exactly, because to define it is to put delimitations on it. And *jeito* does not permit delimitation” (Rega 2000:47).

To begin with, it is important to observe that using *jeito* can be ethically positive or negative. No direct English translation or phrase really captures the essence of *jeito*. “To pull a string” or “to cut through the red tape” have been suggested as the closest equivalents, but they are not totally adequate (Barbosa 1995:36). “Finding a loophole” is an expression in English that catches something of the spirit of *jeito*, in that it is a creative way to get what you want. However, using a loophole usually is technically legal but morally questionable; *jeito* is almost always technically illegal, but in some cases may present a more just alternative to the cold letter of the law. It can be understood simply as “bending the rules” (Hess and DaMatta 1995:19), but sometimes “totally breaking the rules” would be more accurate. Barbosa (1992:32-33) reports from her research that *jeito* is universally seen by Brazilians as a “special” way to resolve a problem or difficult situation, or as a creative solution for an emergency accomplished either through getting around the rules or by employing conciliation or other special talents to reach the desired end. What counts is getting the solution desired, whether that solution be provisional or definitive, legal or illegal. Leonardo Boff defines *jeito* as “the wise and peaceful way to combine personal interests with the rigidity of the norm: it is the way to counter balance the unequal correlation of forces, taking advantages out of weakness; it is the way to

conciliate all interests so no one is hurt....In this way the law is joined with the daily social reality, permitting a social navigation that is tortured, but peaceful” (2000b:115).

In the view of evangelical Christian scholar Lourenço Stelio Rega, “For some determined situation to be considered *jeito*, something unforeseen and adverse to the individual’s objectives must have occurred, and the solution demands a special, efficient and rapid way to address the problem. Not just any strategy will do. It has to produce the desired results within a very short deadline...without worrying if the solution encountered is definitive or not, ideal or provisional, legal or illegal” (2000:48). He goes on to give a broad overview of the kinds of situations that constitute *jeito*. To use *jeito* is

to find a response, a way out, of a situation that in general is not desired or which one cannot face; it is to get out of a situation; it is to make things work out according to someone’s desires; it is to close one’s eyes to situations that may prejudice an individual; it is to get around the norms; it is to take advantage of a situation; in summary, it is to open a way to make things happen the way one wants (2000:48).

Obviously, *jeito* is a social institution that exists on the borderlands of the ethical and unethical. In the popular conception, however, *jeito* leans in the direction of the extra-legal (Levine 1999:403). Barbosa postulates a continuum where, at one end, you have the “favor”, a morally positive act, and at the other extreme you have blatant corruption, with *jeito* right in the middle. The passage from one category to the other is nuanced by the context in which the situation occurs and the type of relationship existent between the people involved (Barbosa 1992:33-34). She identifies two major differences between the favor and *jeito*: the favor creates a hierarchy between persons, while *jeito* always involves persons who are equals, at least for that moment and in that situation; and *jeito* almost always involves some kind of infraction against the rules, while a favor does not (1992:34). At the other end of the spectrum, the difference between *jeito* and

corruption is determined by the material or monetary outcome (1992:34-35). As long as there is no financial advantage involved, or as long as this stays on the level of a tip or buying someone a beer or cup of coffee, one is operating within the limits of *jeito*. If higher levels of advantage are involved, it would be considered corruption. “Unlike corruption, the *jeitinho* involves a way of talking with the other person, a special ethos, and a sense of special relationships” (1995:40).

It is important to note one element in Barbosa’s distinction between a favor and *jeito* that could be missed easily, but which serves as a window for understanding the positive side of *jeito*. She observes that, contrary to the context of the favor, the context of *jeito* presumes an equality between the principals. That sympathetic equality allows the characters involved in the “*jeitinho*” to relate to one another as persons, rather than as impersonal nobodies playing their assigned roles in the social hierarchy. One advantage of the use of *jeito* in Brazilian society is its capacity to humanize relationships and make life more bearable in what would otherwise have been a cold, harsh system if the letter of the law were always followed. The reason is that in a hierarchical society such as Brazil, those who write the laws do not expect to have to live by those laws themselves. They also do not expect others to obey the law if they can get away with not doing so. Therefore, laws are written with the expectation of only partial compliance (Levine 1999:404). Of course, the full letter of the law may be applied at any time to a person without connections.

When a friend of mine was a new missionary in Brazil, an old independent Baptist missionary in the interior of Brazil who had been in Brazil for decades told him a story that illustrates this reality. This missionary had lived through some hard times with



precarious support, and had supplemented his income by hunting to make ends meet.

At some point, the government enacted a conservation law limiting game hunting to certain seasons. Not knowing how he would continue to feed his family, the missionary went to his friend, the state's colonel of military police, to complain. The colonel put his arm around the missionary's shoulders and explained how it worked. "Don't worry about that law. That law is for the others, not for *a gente* (people like us)".

That story does not illustrate *jeito* at work. Rather, it shows the need for *jeito*—although not the need to get around legitimate conservation laws. What it illustrates is the fact that laws are sometimes written for only the unconnected to obey, so *jeito* is called for to level the playing field and avoid injustices. It is a way to personalize and humanize relationships in a hierarchical society. It is a way for people to overcome the barrier of being "nobodies," and to become *gente*, people like us.

In such a context, Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda, author and coordinator of the Advanced Program of Contemporary Culture at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, holds that, "*Jeitinho* is a resistance, a recourse for survival in an authoritarian situation. Everything that you can't get by lawful right comes through *jeitinho*. *Jeitinho* doesn't question the situation, it tries to find a way within it" (2000:112). She goes on to observe that this type of behavior is typical of an oppressive situation, and that the Brazilian people are getting sick of it. She even doubts if this *jeitinho*, something so stereotypically Brazilian, is something that appeals to younger generations (2000:113). My own sense is that what is changing is Brazilians' willingness to accept the hierarchical situation, in which too many of those who write the laws consider themselves above the law. They are moving as a culture in the direction of the democratic ideal, in

which laws apply equally to all. But until that becomes more of a reality, *jeito* will continue to thrive.

Barbosa summarizes some of the common areas of agreement concerning *jeito* in the literature on the subject (1992:26-29). First, most authors see a link between *jeito* and some aspects of Brazilian history, although these are ill-defined. But in seeing *jeito* as being linked somehow to their Portuguese inheritance, “*jeitinho* comes to be conceived as something ‘eternal’ in the interior of Brazilian society” (1992:27). Second, *jeitinho* is seen as a surviving element of economic and social underdevelopment which modern progress will dissipate. A third common point is that *jeito* exists as a functional paralegal institution, serving as an adjustment mechanism for some of the perverse inequalities in Brazilian society. Finally, the literature almost always deals with the question of whether or not there is anything particularly Brazilian about *jeito*.

This is a significant question. Rega affirms that, “*Jeito* is not a ‘privilege’ of Brazilian culture, because when it is associated with corruption it is possible to seek parallels in other cultures” (2000:49). As *jeito* moves along the continuum toward corruption, for example, it becomes something similar to a pay-off in American culture. Certainly, no culture has a corner on that kind of corruption. Barbosa is convinced that, in terms of practical behavior, something similar to *jeito* exists in all societies. However, what is particular to Brazil is that there is a specific native social category that identifies certain social spaces and categories between the legal and illegal, between what is proscribed and what is actually practiced. In addition, *jeito* represents a tendency to see the social universe through categories that are particularly Brazilian, and reflecting specific values that are a product of Brazilian social history (1992:28).

In summary, it is important to recognize that there are some things uniquely Brazilian about *jeito*: its creative “middle way” between a favor and corruption; its skillful, inventive and rapid response to an emergency, which so many Brazilians have developed into an art form; its aspect as a culturally-embedded response to an authoritarian, hierarchical system in a culture that is so warm, effusive and personal in its basic orientation and relational in its worldview; and, above all, in the way Brazilians themselves embrace the use of *jeito* as part of their national identity. Barbosa holds that “*jeitinho* is not only a method of adjustment to the Brazilian institutional reality, but also both a positive and negative element of social identity. It is perceived and recognized as defining us as a country and as a people” (1992:26).

The role of *jeito* as an important symbol of national identity thus has both a positive and a negative dimension. Positively, it “emphasizes the side of Brazilian society that privileges the *human* and *natural* aspects of social reality over the legal, political, and institutional ones. Thus, the *jeitinho brasileiro* expresses the cordial, conciliatory, happy, warm, and human spirit” of Brazil (Barbosa 1995:46). It represents the triumph of a worldview oriented toward persons and relationships over the institutionalized aspects of society. But when unequal treatment is seen as undermining justice and interfering with the function of social institutions, the “*jeitinho brasileiro* then comes to represent all that must be ended in order for Brazil to become a truly modern society”. Thus, when we condemn the *jeitinho brasileiro*, we call for the prevalence of impersonal and universal principles” (1995:46).



It is almost impossible to imagine life in Brazil without *jeito*. In fact, we can even say that *jeito* defines the Brazilian way of life. As one contemporary Brazilian puts it, “*Jeitinho* is an entire style of life, a complicated fact” (Bornhiem 2000:95).

One of our own experiences offers an illustration of its utility. After two years in Brazil on temporary, one-year visas, we were eligible to apply for permanent residency. We got our paperwork together to send to the federal government, but ran into a problem. One of the required documents was a certificate of health, which we were to get from a doctor in charge of medical inspections in ports and airports in our state. We went to the office, only to discover that the doctor in our state was no longer working. He had been fired by the new president of Brazil, who had entered office promising to clean up the federal employment roles and get rid of all the crooks who held government titles and drew government paychecks, but who never showed up to do any work. The doctor in our state, who was the only person in the country who legally could give us the official document we needed, was no longer in office—no one was. So, we went to our family physician, who wrote an attestation of our health on an unofficial document. We took this to the Federal Police in our state, who verified that it was impossible to attain a health certificate on the necessary form. They wrote a letter testifying to that fact, which we attached to our physician’s letter, and sent it all in to the capital in Brasília with our other documents. A few weeks later, we were notified that our request for a permanent visa had been denied for failure to provide all the proper documents, and were given a deadline to leave the country. So, although the medical form was supposed to come from your state of residence, we traveled to a neighboring state that did have a doctor still in office who could give us a certificate of health on the proper government form.

When we went to see the doctor, we were informed that he was not in on that day, but that he had a very full calendar and we could only get an appointment in four months. We explained our situation, and that the date we were being offered was weeks after our deportation deadline. The scheduling clerk was unmoved, flatly refusing to listen to our pleas for an earlier date. After my attempts to work out a solution failed and I became exasperated, my wife took over. She also got nowhere. But Brazilians love children, so we told our daughters, five and eight-year olds, to talk to the clerk and make an emotional plea, telling her they didn't want to have to leave Brazil and all their friends at school. They went to her desk, speaking perfect Portuguese and turning on the tears on cue, and she left her desk. A few minutes later she came back with the doctor who wasn't in that day and who was too busy to be seen for four months. He immediately led us back to his office, talked to the girls about their school, asked us about our work and how we liked Brazil, and engaged us in conversation about the best vacation spots in the state of Rio. He made a call to his secretary—the one who had told us he wasn't in and we could only come back in four months—and she came in full of smiles to serve us *cafezinho* (espresso) and cookies. Half an hour later, without a physical exam, we walked out of his office with the papers we needed and everything resolved. That is *jeito*. Our children had it, and apparently we didn't—except for the fact that we had enough *jeito* by that point to know when it was time to pull our trump card and use our children. In this situation, *jeito* was the only way around the impossible position of being told on the one hand that we absolutely had to get a particular document on a specific government form, and on the other hand being denied any possibility of obtaining the document through the prescribed channels. *Jeito* is a necessary skill to navigate

successfully through the array of “no’s” and “you can’t’s” “In Brazil...., between the “you may” and the “you can’t”, we find a *‘jeito’*” (DaMatta 1984:100).

### Time

Anyone who has experienced Brazil knows that one of the most obvious differences between Brazilian and North American cultures lies in their differing attitudes toward time. The reader will note that I place the primary distinction in terms of fundamental attitudes, rather than in terms of fundamental concepts. If the most significant difference between cultures in their concept of time lies in the distinction between linear and cyclical views of time, Brazilian culture conforms to the Western pattern in this respect. There is one important exception in this characterization of Brazil’s philosophical concept of time, which will be discussed below. First, however, we will look at a couple of Brazilian attitudes toward time which are important to take into account as we reflect on needs for missionary training.

Maria Bernadete da Silva is director of the Integrated Center of Education and Missions (CIEM) in Rio de Janeiro. Thinking about the Brazilian concept of time and how it impacts Brazilian values, she observes that most Brazilians live primarily in the present, with a secondary eye on the past. This being the case, she says, a principal value of Brazilian culture is to take full advantage of life in the present. Hence, things related to recreation and fun are very important (Silva 2004:personal interview).

One of the Brazilian passions is *futebol*, or soccer. People play it from infancy and often continue into middle age. They love rooting for their favorite professional teams, and nothing matches their passion for their national team, especially at World Cup



time. Other valued outlets of recreation include music, going to the beach, and parties—especially the annual party of all parties, Carnaval, the Festival of the Flesh.

Why is there such a focus on the present in Brazilian culture, and such an absence of a forward look to the future? The answer can be found in Brazil's past. Brazilians have lived with social injustice and dashed hopes for centuries, but the elite always manage to guard their positions and prevent deep, fundamental and lasting change. Brazilians feel that the future is out of their hands, due both to a fatalistic belief in God's control of their lives and history no matter what they do, and also due to centuries of empirical evidence pointing to the fact that the elite will never allow fundamental change. "Our most profound experience with collective time indicates returns, reversions and cyclical movements that obligate us to watch the same film many times. As if it were possible to exorcise ghosts of the past" (DaMatta 1994:32).

With this cultural focus on the present, it should not be surprising that forward-looking planning is a challenge in many settings. The tendency is, in all kinds of endeavors, to think primarily about immediate and short-term consequences of actions and decisions. Long-term consequences are not a major factor. What counts are immediate consequences, results, and benefits. This cultural trait of focusing on the present is known as *immediatismo*, or a desire for immediate fulfillment. The next chapter presents data demonstrating its impact on Brazilian missions.

Another basic characteristic of Brazilians' attitude regarding time is that there is a relational rather than an event orientation. This is typical of a polychronic culture, in which people juggle more than one thing at a time, and where time is subordinate to relationships. This is evidenced by the fact that meetings begin, not at the announced

time, but when the principal participants get there, and they end when the leaders have had their say. This is a contrast to monochronic cultures such as the USA, where social relationships are subordinated to time (Hess and DaMatta :33).

E. T. Hall's concept of monochronic and polychronic time is one that deserves further elaboration. Basically, "monochronic time means paying attention to and doing only one thing at a time. Polychronic time means being involved with many things at once" (1990:13). Monochronic time emphasizes schedules, segmentation and promptness (1989:17), while in polychronic time, several things happen at once, possibly due to the fact that people are more involved with one another (1966:162). In a monochronic culture, time is almost tangible (1990:13) and determines and coordinates everything (1989:18); in cultures with polychronic time, the focus is on people (1990:14). One example that Hall gives of polychronic culture is that two Latins conversing on a street corner would more likely choose to be late for meetings than to terminate the conversation before its natural conclusion (Hall 1990:14; see Appendix 5 for Hall's characterizations of monochronic and polychronic people). Hall mentions (North) Americans and northern Europeans as examples of peoples that are monochronic in their approach to time, and Mediterranean and Latin cultures as examples of polychronic peoples (1989:17-21; 1990:13-14).

We now turn to the point at which the Brazilian philosophical concept of time does vary from the traditional Western pattern. While Brazilians have a basically linear concept of time, DaMatta sees two parallel forms of time coexisting in the Brazilian culture (2000:36). "For time and space to be made concrete and felt as "things", a system of contrasts is needed" (:36). It is this system of contrasts that takes time and space out

of the realm of philosophical to sociological categories. The most striking contrast is between normal time, lived in the day-to-day experiences, and situations that are out of the ordinary but nevertheless invented and programmed by society (:37).

There is, however, another contrast which is more significant in relation to missionary training. While the basic attitude toward time, in historical and impersonal terms, is that it is linear and cumulative, time at home is cyclical, constantly repeating itself (DaMatta 2000:60). Here in the home, time is personal and affective, opening up to a concept that is close to the heart of every Brazilian: *saudade*.

*Saudade* is a “basic category of [Brazilian] collective existence” (DaMatta 1994:18). Page (1995:16) defines *saudade* as “nostalgia”, but that is only a partial description. Actually, there is no one word or phrase in English that adequately conveys the meaning of *saudade*. Joaquim Nabuco, a famous Brazilian abolitionist, described it for an audience at Vassar College in 1909 in this way:

But how can I translate a sentiment that in no other language, except ours, has been crystallized in one single word?...It signifies the sad memories of life, but also its imperishable hopes. The tombstones bring it engraved with the inscription: *saudade*. The message between lovers is *saudade*. *Saudade* is the message of those absent from their country and friends. *Saudade*, as you see, is the season of the heart, imprisoned in its ruins and growing in its own solitude. To translate for you the meaning, you will need, in English, four words: *remembrance, love, grief, longing*. Omitting one of these, the complete sentiment cannot be translated. However, *saudade* is nothing more than a new form, polished by tears, of the word *soledade*, solitude (quoted in DaMatta 1994:28).

It has been a matter of debate whether *saudade* is something unique to Brazil and its mother country, Portugal. Certainly, remembrance, love, grief and longing are universal concepts. But it is also necessary to look at *saudade*, not just as a concept denoting certain human emotions, but also as a sociological category (DaMatta 1994:27). As a sociological category, *saudade* is able to create or modify reality (:29). Brazilians



(and the Portuguese) look at *saudade* as their word, communicating something between members of the community that others can only approximate in meaning and intensity.

According to the Sappir-Whorf hypothesis, language not only provides a means to express meaning, but also shapes the human perception of meaning and reality (McGee and Warms 2004:385-386, citing Whorf 1956:213 ). As a human being, I can feel nostalgia, love, grief and longing. I can remember people and places that are dear to me. As someone who has lived with Brazilians for a significant part of my life, I know that I have a good idea of what Brazilians are talking about when they use the word *saudade*. But I have not been brought up with the word and all the meaning that it invokes; it is not part of my native cultural ethos. And because of this, I know deep inside myself that I cannot experience *saudade* exactly in the same way that a Brazilian can.

In *saudade*, we are confronted with a problem of configuration and *ethos*. In other words, of how a clearly universal notion—time and its passage, its indifference, its duration and its evocative capacity—was deepened with an intensity out of the ordinary by the use of a word that comes to be the vehicle for a complex conjunction of ideas and of a social institution. In this way, the word *saudade*, as an expression of temporality, ceases to be a rational and neutral vehicle and becomes itself the reality of the idea that it symbolizes. This word is thus the most finished expression of a concept of special time, time that desires to be modern yet without abandoning its human and relational quality (DaMatta 1994:29-30).

### Value

Many of the core Brazilian values have surfaced, explicitly or implicitly, during the course of this chapter's exploration of Brazilian culture. Other values, which are very important for understanding Brazilian culture in general, are not that important for the issue at hand. Therefore, the discussion here can be relatively brief.

We have discovered, for example, that Brazil is a relational culture. It is no great surprise, then, to note that relationships, both with family and friends, is a core value—perhaps *the* core value—of Brazilian culture. Family, for instance, is more than a category of Brazilian culture, but perhaps the most basic value of all. With it we can associate other values, such as honor, shame and respect.

We see the Brazilian value of relationships in their attitude toward time. In Brazil, events do not start at the scheduled hour, but when the important participants get there. And if you are on the way to an event and meet up with a friend you have not seen in a while, you will of course prioritize your relationship with your friend.

Barbosa refers indignantly to DeGaulle's famous quote in which he said that Brazil is not a serious country, and vigorously defends her country's culture and values.

Why are we not a serious country? We are not reliable because we admit that friendship can have more value than the rule of law; because personal relations, once established, have precedence over any other criteria....in summary we are not serious because the parameters of the individualistic ideology are bypassed at every moment in our social practice. Our relational worldview changes the public domain into the private and attributes legitimacy to what in other circumstances would be considered spurious (1995:46).

We have seen as well that for Brazilians, "Virtue is in the middle." Brazilians search for the middle ground that encompasses and satisfies seemingly irreconcilable values and beliefs. "In Protestant cultures there was usually a clear division between categories, with one of those categories usually marked as superior. In contrast, in Brazil there was a tendency to move toward a middle ground of mediation and ambiguity" (Hess and DaMatta 1995:12). The value, then, is the non-judgmental acceptance of the other and his or her opinions and beliefs.

This refusal to be exclusive or judgmental, especially on moralistic or creedal grounds, represents an important value in Brazilian culture. Joseph Page cites one well-known instance that serves as an example of Brazilians' willingness to defy moralistic convention. In the early nineties, Roberta Close rose to prominence and celebrity status as one of the most beautiful women in Brazil. Her celebrity was enhanced, not diminished, by the fact that until just a couple of years earlier, Roberta had been a male (Page 1995:3). As an example of the Brazilian readiness to accept creedal diversity, we can look to Leonardo Boff's ready acceptance of other religious traditions from the section above on syncretism.

Money is another basic value of Brazilian culture. It is significant that the primary motive for colonizing Brazil was commercial. From the beginning, the profit motive has driven the social structure in Brazil. It is not by accident that there exists the tremendous disparity of wealth in Brazil, provoking Alcione Araújo to declare, "There are two classic concepts that disappeared from Brazilian society. Can one speak about social justice in a society that makes money the new god, and exacerbated individualism its model of life? And what about ethics? Only if it is an ethic of conflict, of competition, the ethics of war" (2000:32).

A later chapter brings out points of relevance for missionary training that touch on all of these values. And though there are many values which have not been examined due to the limitations of space, one more stands out as especially relevant for the subject at hand. That value is joy. Joy might be considered more a characteristic of the Brazilian people than a value, but this trait is so strong that one must ask why. The reality is that Brazilians often exhibit joy, not just when circumstances would seem to dictate it, but



also in the face of suffering. Darcy Ribeiro speaks with marveling admiration of the “unbelievable joy and astonishing will to happiness” that moves all Brazilians (Ribeiro 1995:19).

The Brazilian capacity for joy astonishes foreigners taken unaware, sometimes to the point of scandalizing them. DaMatta relates (1995:279) the story of Bryant Gumbel, former host of NBC television’s Today Show, coming to Brazil to do the show during Carnival and asking him, “Why this celebration, with so much luxury and waste, when there are so many poor people here?” DaMatta was struck with Gumbel’s inability to understand a celebration that was so joyful in the midst of so much poverty. As a Brazilian, DaMatta must have instinctively known something that escaped the American television personality, expressed by one of the driving forces of Rio’s Carnival: “The fact is that joy dynamizes” (Trinta 2000:138).

Unfortunately, Brazilians often celebrate more as a matter of the will than anything else. It can be a coping mechanism to deal with the crushing burdens of life. Sometimes, Brazilians laugh and party so they will not cry. The meaning of Brazilian humor can be embedded in multiple layers (Goldstein 2003:3). Humor “is where a particular kind of communication and meaning-making takes place. Humor is a vehicle for expressing sentiments that are difficult to communicate publicly or that point to areas of discontent in social life. The meanings behind laughter reveal both the cracks in the system and the masked or more subtle ways that power is challenged” (2003:5).

Given a genuine reason to celebrate, a people that has learned to express joy even in the face of difficulty knows how to go all out. Nobody who has seen Brazilians party at Carnival, or when their local team wins an important soccer match, doubts their

capacity. And when the Brazilian national soccer team wins the World Cup, the entire country explodes in an explosion of joy, the intensity of which would astonish and delight the typical visitor.

Brazilian Christians have a genuine reason to celebrate. Their worship communicates the joy they find in Christ, and it is contagious. At a Brazilian Baptist national missions conference in the year 2000, one of the speakers was a young Russian missionary to his own people. He spoke from his heart about the greatest contribution of Brazilian missionaries among his people. The Russians have known much suffering and sorrow, he shared, and their spirits are heavy because of it. But he recognized that Brazilians have also experienced their share of sorrow, and yet, he noted, Brazilian Christians were characterized by a deep, spontaneous joy that he had never seen. He shared how this joy had transformed his life, and how communicating his newfound joy in Christ to his fellow Russians had become a central motivating force in his life and ministry. Brazilian mission candidates need to know the impact that their joy can have in some very hard places, and determine that they too will share the joy of Christ in a genuine way wherever they go.

### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented an overview of the Brazilians' frustrating search for a national sense of identity. This presentation served as an introductory overview of Brazilian cultural reality. It was followed by an analysis of Brazilian culture and worldview, based on the cultural model of David Burnett.

## Chapter 4

### Voice of the Brazilian Missionaries

#### Introduction to the Chapter

Chapter 4 reports the results of interview research conducted with twenty-six Brazilian missionaries on pioneer fields, plus interviews with seven mission agency executives and six missionary trainers. The chapter is brief in its presentation—a brevity that belies its complexity. To begin, it describes the interview process used to discover and organize the principle ideas contained within the chapter. Then, it summarizes findings and explains their relevance to the subject of preparing Brazilian missionaries. To do this, a series of tables is presented of various interview categories, as well as brief textual presentations of issues in each category which are relevant for further exploration and application in Chapter 3. Some of the tables are too long to be included in their entirety in the main body of the chapter. In these cases, they are included in an abbreviated form within the chapter, as well as in a corresponding appendix with a more complete range of responses. In addition, an appendix entitled “Extended Interview Report: Brazilians on International Teams” offers a more lengthy reflection based on one of the more insightful responses to an interview question

#### The Interview Research Process

Interviews were conducted with missionaries, agency executives and trainers of missionaries, using an interview schedule that was specific to each group. These forms are contained in appendices at the end of the dissertation. The focus of the interview research is on the experience of the missionaries themselves; interviews with executives



and trainers are intended to provide depth and additional perspective. No comments are attributed in order to respect the confidentiality of respondents, as they were promised, and which in the case of several of the missionaries is necessary as an issue of personal physical security on the field. Findings are divided into broad categories in the form of respondents' comments, and presented in summarized form or occasional short quotes in tables throughout the chapter.

These interviews were all conducted in Portuguese. Responses were recorded into a computer (in Portuguese) during the process of the interviews. Afterward, responses were compiled into bulleted excerpts organized by interview question, and translated into English. Finally, these excerpts were reorganized on the basis of categories that became evident during the process of evaluation and reflection. Those that stood out as most insightful, revealing, or representative, on the basis of criteria which are delineated below in the section entitled "Analytic Process," are included in the series of tables around which this chapter is constructed.

Due to the free-flowing nature of the conversations during these interviews, fieldnotes were typed in a hurried fashion in order to keep up with the respondent's train of thought. Consequently, in the fieldnotes quotation marks generally are not used to distinguish between respondents' actual words, and the summary of their responses. Usually, the differences between their words and the summaries were evident in translating the excerpts into English. Since it is important to let the reader be privy to the same information, a code will be used in these tables to signal the kind of response being recorded. Text in quotation marks represents the English translation of respondents'

actual words in Portuguese. Summaries of interviewee responses will be signaled through the use of *italics*. Commentary will appear as plain text.

### Context of Missionary Interviews

The first question of the missionary interview schedule (see Appendix 1) was included more as a discussion starter and to set context than for specific data. Something of that context is relevant for the reader. The eleven female and fifteen male missionaries who were interviewed serve in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia among unreached peoples, or in lands where the church is small and the people face rigorous conditions such as extreme poverty, endemic violence, and war. They are engaged in a wide range of ministries. These include direct evangelism and church planting, medical ministry, children's work, university student ministry, ministry with the deaf, tentmaking ministries such as professionals in soccer, medicine or international business, the ministry of research on unreached people groups, radio ministry, and leadership training.

All interviews were conducted in Brazil. Most of the missionaries interviewed (nineteen) had spent their entire overseas career with the *Junta de Missões Mundiais*, the World Mission Board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention. Three had spent time with both the Brazilian Baptist board and a non-denominational agency, while four had spent their entire careers with a non-denominational agency. Only three of the twenty-six had gone out under an agency known for a charismatic theology. All had served at least one complete term of service, which is usually about four years, although one missionary had a first term of only two years. All continued in active mission service at the time of the interview, although two have since returned to Brazil, at least temporarily.

The most common training received by missionary respondents was a seminary course in religious education or theology, leading to ministry in Brazil before going to the field. Eighteen missionaries had completed degree courses in one of these areas; two had gone to missionary training institutions. Three missionary wives had college-level education, but not in missiology or theology. Among the missionaries most satisfied with their preparation were those who engaged in ministry on an “intermediate” field—working with another people in a different culture, but a culture nearer to that of Brazil than the culture of the people with whom they wanted eventually to work on a pioneer field.

Some sought training in one of the Brazilian mission training centers that have been established in recent years, with mixed results. One respondent had received a full year of training in what is one of the most respected mission training and sending agencies in Brazil, and her report painted an alarming picture. Several of the trainers in that setting were young people who had recently completed the course themselves; they were made trainers despite the fact that several did not have a college or seminary degree, nor did they have any experience on any mission field whatsoever. Nevertheless, some of these trainers tried to use their authority as trainers in a way that many of the students considered abusive. Only two out of the original group of twelve finished the training. Much has changed in that training center since then, but only after a number of lives were affected negatively. For optimists, this report might serve as a demonstration of how far missionary training has progressed in Brazil. For others, the report emphasizes the dreadful inadequacies that missionary training in Brazil still is striving to overcome.



One noteworthy result of the various responses to the initial questions asking for the missionaries' opinions concerning their training is the overwhelmingly negative evaluation on the part of experienced missionaries who had relied for their primary missions training on seminaries and/or mission agencies. That was the response of missionaries back from the field. Interestingly, among the first candidates for crosscultural missions sent to our training center in Rio by their agency for required training (a new requirement for their candidates going to the field), some of the pastors we worked with there who had seminary training rebelled at having to go through the program. They thought that their seminary training and pastoral experience in Brazil already qualified them for crosscultural service. In other words, we have the disconcerting situation of veteran missionaries telling us that their seminary training was woefully inadequate preparation for crosscultural ministry, while missionary candidates were convinced that they knew all they needed to know to be a missionary, because they had been to seminary.

The overall reaction to training offered by agencies was not as negative as the evaluation of seminary training. It was still less than enthusiastic, although there do appear to be a limited number of agencies doing their own training to the satisfaction of their missionaries. However, most of the respondents who did feel satisfied with their training had taken some kind of personal initiative to get it, either through mission training courses that were not required by their agency, through life experiences such as mission service in intermediate fields, going to live among their people for a time as a student, or some combination of the above.

### Analytic Process

Factors that research indicates are important for training Brazilian mission candidates were grouped together in clusters. Ten clusters emerged from literature research— two from the literature on missionary training, and eight from the literature on Brazilian culture. The clusters deriving from these different sources were used and verified somewhat differently. An eleventh cluster was included to provide an overview of the characteristics that Brazilian missionaries, agency executives and missionary trainers themselves identified as significant factors in Brazilian culture that affect those engaged in missionary service. The processes by which these clusters emerged and were tested is explained below.

The literature on missionary training, which was presented in Chapter 2, developed two primary concepts which were deemed significant for preparing missionaries in the Brazilian context. The fundamental philosophical underpinning for missionary preparation discussed in Chapter 2 was that of holistic training. Significant attention also was given in the literature to the importance of sensitivity to cultural context in missionary preparation. These were developed as the first two clusters presented in this chapter, and labeled as Holistic Training and Crosscultural Component. It should be noted that the basic concept for these clusters is not original to this research. The idea that effective training includes components which focus on practical experience and personal growth, as well as on academic subjects, is a widely-held conviction on the part of a number of writers, as was seen in Chapter 2. It has been promoted by the Association of Brazilian Missions Professors (APMB), and is widely accepted by the Brazilian trainers I have met, and with whom I have discussed issues in missionary

training informally, as well as in the interview process. The same could be said in general for the cluster labeled Crosscultural Component, and for some of the specific sub-categories in that cluster. The research task here, then, was to see if experienced missionaries themselves expressed felt needs for more attention to these two areas during the training process, not to test a new hypothesis, but to verify a widely-held idea that has influenced missionary training in some Brazilian settings.

During the course of literature research on Brazilian culture, I was looking for cultural themes, and elements of those themes, that might be relevant for missionary preparation. The theoretical sensitivity necessary to identify these relevant themes was derived in part from the literature on missionary preparation, as well as from working in the areas of Brazilian theological education and missionary training for over eight years, and having the personal experience of living in the culture and identifying with the people on a deep level since 1989. It was developed further during the process of interview research. These various elements conform to the sources of theoretical sensitivity identified by Strauss and Corbin: reading, professional experience, personal experience, and the analytic process (1990:42-43). After Chapter 3 was written, a review of the chapter identified over twenty potentially relevant themes through a process of open coding. These themes were then grouped together in eight clusters by axial coding.

When a cultural theme was identified as potentially relevant for missionary training, that potential relevance was formulated as a hypothesis, and tested against the responses of those interviewed. The assumption was that if a theme were indeed significant for missionary preparation, it would come out in the responses to the interview



schedules. Cultural themes and characteristics that did not emerge in the interview process were considered to be unverified, and were not included in the clusters that are presented later in this chapter. While the cultural themes in themselves are familiar to those well-versed in Brazilian culture, the originality of this research comes in the process of identifying the themes as relevant for missionary training, and verifying their relevance through the use of interviews and analysis.

The method used in verifying the hypothesis, once the theme had been identified, was to search the interview data for evidence that missionaries and other members of the Brazilian missions community had indicated the theme's significance through their interview responses. A theme would be verified as significant on the basis of several criteria.

One criterion used to verify the significance of a cultural theme through the interviews was by noting a number of similar responses. Another factor taken into consideration, which added weight to the importance of individual responses, was an obvious depth of reflection and the integration of personal experiences on the part of the respondent. Another was the apparent degree to which missionary respondents had been able to adapt to their host culture and develop an effective ministry—although this criterion must be considered secondary due to the researcher's inability to determine this from personal observation of the missionaries on their field of service. Consequently, it was necessary to evaluate their level of success in adaptation and service solely on the basis of what the missionaries themselves reported, and the interviewer's reaction to what was being said. The subjective nature of these criteria therefore makes these evaluations more tentative, but they nevertheless must be acknowledged as a factor in weighing the

importance and relevance of what was being said. The responses of those who demonstrated more self-awareness and insight concerning what their crosscultural ministry experience had taught them were considered more significant.

The question of subjectivity highlights yet another criterion that came into play while evaluating the significance of different responses: the researcher's own insight into the importance of different interview responses. The validity of this element in the process is dependent on the degree of theoretical sensitivity possessed by the researcher, according to the established standards for grounded theory research. This legitimacy was established above.

It should be noted that in this evaluative process, some cultural themes, or sub-categories of those themes, were discarded due to a lack of supporting testimony to their importance on the part of interview respondents. Also, in order to avoid an overly cumbersome number of categories, some cultural themes were grouped together under larger umbrella clusters. As a result of this process, it was not always possible to categorize with ease the proper sub-category, or even cluster, for some of the responses. Some responses could have fit in more than one place. In looking over the list of clusters below, for example, the reader by now can see that there would naturally be some similarity between the categories Brazilian Spiritual Ethos and Superficial Religiosity, or between *Jeito* and *Imediatismo*. What is not readily apparent, however, is the fact that there was also some overlap between the cluster Brazilian Culture and Teams and both *Saudade* and *Home & Street*. It is important to remember, therefore, that the clusters and sub-categories identified in the pages that follow are not rigid categories, but fluid and interdependent.

An eleventh cluster, Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission, is a compilation of responses from missionaries, mission agency executives, and missionary trainers which gives a broad overview of how Brazilians involved in missions evaluate the positives and negatives of their own cultural characteristics as they relate to their involvement in mission. It is not used to develop any new lines of thinking; rather, it reinforces the relevance of cultural characteristics identified during the course of literature research on Brazilian culture and reported in Chapter 3, as well as reaffirming ideas reported in assessing interviews through the course of this chapter.

This is a process which is based on a large amount of objective data (gleaned from the literature and field data from interviews), along with a significant interpretive element as well. Its reliability is dependent on the researcher's attention to the data, analytical skills, and his or her degree of theoretical sensitivity, gained from both the literature and life experience, in order to be able to identify what is significant in both the literature and interview data. The process could be repeated by other researchers in other contexts, but only on the condition that they had established a significant level of theoretical sensitivity in their own context.

The eleven different clusters used to organize missionary responses to the questions on the Missionary Interview Schedule include: Holistic Training, Crosscultural Component, *Saudade*, Brazilian Spiritual Ethos, Superficial Religiosity, Brazilian Ethnic Diversity, *Jeito*, *Imediatismo*, Home & Street, Brazilian Culture and Teams, and Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission. Below is an analysis of each of these clusters, using the process delineated in the Statement of the Problem, contained in Chapter 1.



## Holistic Training

As mentioned above, the fundamental philosophical underpinning for missionary preparation discussed in Chapter 2 is the concept of holistic training, which includes academic and practical preparation, along with an emphasis on character development. These three aspects of holistic training, then, are the natural sub-categories for this cluster. Once again, it must be recognized that this cluster represents an idea widely held in missionary training circles. It did not emerge in the same way as the clusters associated with Brazilian culture, but was tested in a similar fashion. Questions two through five of the Missionary Interview Schedule (see Appendix A) were designed to ascertain if the missionaries' reflections on their experiences validate the widely held convictions among trainers that the elements of this cluster are, indeed, part of the necessary foundation for missionary training in the Brazilian context. No training proposal could be considered sound without researching this basic issue from the perspective of the missionaries.

A disquieting finding serves as a beginning point in considering missionaries' assessment of their pre-field training. The missionaries were asked, "Are you satisfied with the training you received?" Out of twenty-four who responded to the question, sixteen answered that they were not. Three replied that they were satisfied with their training, but only because they had taken the initiative to get training on their own that their agencies did not offer or require. Only five responded unconditionally that they were satisfied. Obviously, the interviewed missionaries as a group felt that their training was lacking.

What did the missionaries feel they missed most in their inadequate training, in light of their subsequent experience on the field? The overwhelming evaluation of the missionaries is that pre-field training needs to be more practical. Without any leading questions, nineteen of the respondents either stated that training needs to be more practical, or mentioned specific elements of practical training that were lacking in their experience. This preference reflects the need for more balance in the training programs, as well as a Brazilian preference for an approach that values relationships, that de-emphasizes the formal learning methods of typical academic programs, and that approaches issues beginning with life needs and then moves to theory, rather than vice versa (see Appendix 1 on High/Low Context Comparisons, page 249).

It is interesting to note the practical kinds of training that experienced Brazilian missionaries thought were important to include in training mission candidates. Nine missionaries expressed a need to help candidates learn a language during training. For some, the language to be studied should be the language of the people on the future field of the candidates. Others suggested that candidates should learn English, either to facilitate their adaptation to an international team, or to serve as a base for studying the local language, since in many places there would be no language helpers available who spoke Portuguese. Two of this group suggested that training in how to learn a language was needed.

A second area of focus for those desiring more practical training revolved around anthropological issues: dealing with culture shock, cultural adaptation and integration, more information on the people, culture and religion on the field to which they were going, and how to do anthropological research. There were a total of fifteen missionaries

offering one or more responses in this area. In addition, missionaries cited a wide range of other practical issues that one or more mentioned specifically as missing but necessary or helpful elements to incorporate into missionary training. These topics included accounting, evangelism, experience in a local church in Brazil, short-term experiences on a crosscultural field, dealing with spiritual conflict, electricity, sewing, auto mechanics, computer skills, and learning to live as part of a team.

Who does the training is another issue in making training more practical. Brazilian seminaries, agencies and missionary training courses are full of leaders and instructors with little or no practical field experience. The use of missionary trainers without any experience on the mission field received repeated criticism from missionaries in evaluating their training experience. One missionary said that he would have liked to have been trained by someone who had actually been to the field. Another missionary related the story of a time he had been giving a presentation in Brazil, and asked all the missions professors to rise. Forty stood. Then he asked for all those with experience on the field to remain standing; the only one who did not sit down was a North American missionary to Brazil.

The problem of trainers with no field experience is exacerbated by the fact that, particularly in the mission agencies and missionary training courses, many of these leaders also lack significant formal training in missiological studies. There is a dearth of Brazilians with both practical experience and academic credentials in missiology, which goes a long way toward explaining why candidates find their training heavy on theory or on organizational orientation, but lacking in practical effectiveness. The sad truth is actually worse, for in my experience a large part, if not the majority, of those training



missionaries without missionary experience themselves also lack solid academic credentials. In other words, Brazilian missionary training, when it happens at all, has too often been a case of the blind leading the blind.

Eight missionaries offered their opinion that seminary training was not adequate preparation for crosscultural mission service. Comments focused on the fact that seminary courses were too academic, or oriented toward preparing graduates to serve churches in Brazil. While eight unsolicited opinions in this matter communicates a rather wide-spread sentiment, the significance of these comments is underscored when one remembers that sixteen missionaries, almost all of whom were seminary graduates, regarded their pre-field training as inadequate. It is interesting that one missionary reported that, while seminary training in his experience had not been adequate, it could become adequate with a change in philosophy on the part of the seminaries. While one such comment may not be deemed significant on the surface, its importance is magnified by the fact that it came from a missionary who was a graduate of a Brazilian seminary, had exercised a vibrant ministry on the field, and had gone on to earn a doctorate in missiology from Europe.

There is another interesting aspect of what interview responses revealed about attitudes toward holistic training. When missionaries talk about de-emphasizing the academic aspect of training, they are asking, with unanimity, for more practical training. But when trainers of missionaries speak about the need to go beyond academic training, they are talking about both practical training and the kind of preparation that provokes personal and spiritual growth, with a strong emphasis on spiritual growth. It is not that missionaries are unaware of the need for spiritual growth. It becomes evident below that

missionaries speak candidly about the kind of growth provoked by their experiences on the field. The difference is that for the missionaries, the locus of their most pronounced spiritual growth was the field, not the pre-field period of preparation.

Trainers cannot expect to prepare candidates to the point that there will be no surprises or no situations that stretch them to their limits when they reach the field. What can be done, and what agency leaders and trainers alike realize must be done with a sense of urgency, is to prepare candidates with a spiritual foundation upon which new missionaries can build during the trials they will surely experience on the field.

Following are some responses that expose the need for, and lack of, holistic training.

**Holistic Training**  
**Table # 1<sup>1</sup>**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Academic Focus	“The intellectualism of our seminaries breaks the missionary spirit. My flame was lit despite my academic background, thanks in large part to a missionary professor.”
	<i>Seminaries need to do more to integrate the academic, spiritual, and practical.</i>
	“All my theological training completely left out missiology.”
	A non-denominational agency leader, responding to a question concerning the best place to train missionaries, said that “The seminary today is irrelevant—it only helps to maintain what you already have. It doesn’t give any base in understanding culture—not even Brazilian culture. It doesn’t emphasize evangelism.”
Spiritual Growth/ Character	“I learned (on field) to be practical and transparent. My word and my life have to give the same message. Our people are sensitive to this.”
	<i>Before going to the field, quiet time was about “that moment,” but during the day, I had more own life. On the field, I learned to depend the entire day on Him. Here in Brazil, everything is easy.</i>
	A trainer says: “Training has a lot to do with the crosscultural; but beyond this there is character, that has a whole lot to do with the spiritual. All the theory doesn’t help without being broken.... Missiology already is in second place.”
Practical Focus	<i>Training is cut off from missionary practice—even trainers do not have missionary experience.</i>
	“I needed more information on my field—I arrived on my field without a team, without any language ability, and not even knowing that my country has various peoples and languages.”
	Apart from practical ministry-related skills and knowledge, respondents said that they wished they had been trained in other practical areas—such as computer skills, auto mechanics, electricity, and sewing.
	A missionary felt that before departure for the field, training was needed on “how to live and work with a team. Seminary was just theory, without pastoral accompaniment, or experience with a team. On my first field, none of us had experience with a team, and it was a tremendous shock.”
	<i>One missionary said that he would have liked to have been trained by someone who had actually been to the field.</i>

<sup>1</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview Schedule, questions 4 and 5



### Crosscultural Component

In addition to more practical training, or perhaps as a specific function of a practical orientation, missionary respondents spoke of the need for pre-field orientation regarding a wide range of cultural issues. As mentioned above, an area of training that fifteen missionaries mentioned as a need was their difficulty in recognizing and dealing with culture shock, and with adapting to the field in a way to enhance the contextualization of the Christian message. Another specific is that missionaries feel that culture shock is deepened by language inadequacy. As reported above, they demonstrate anxiety about the need to attain some kind of language proficiency before leaving Brazil, either in the language of their anticipated host culture or in an international language such as English, Spanish or French.

Attention also is needed in preparing candidates to live in a non-Christian environment. Although they did not always use these words, it seems to be clearly within the intent of the missionaries to say that we need to explore issues in living in an environment that is not only non-Christian, but hostile to Christianity. This is evident in the missionaries' references to spiritual conflict (from eight different missionaries, some of whom referred to the subject repeatedly). One missionary indicated that the thing he would have liked most to have learned in training was "how to be a Christian in a non-Christian world." Interestingly, he voiced this desire, not in the negative connotation of spiritual conflict, but positively in terms of a desire to live in such a way that people would see Jesus in his actions and character. Moreover, whether stated negatively or positively, helping mission candidates learn to live as Christians in a non-Christian world

is a concern not only of the missionaries themselves, but also of the leading missiological educators in Brazil, as well as many agency executives.

As a couple of the citations from the longer version of Table 2, Appendix 8 indicate, the issue of gender roles and restrictions presents challenges for female missionaries going to serve in Muslim cultures, especially among Arabs. Five female missionaries, both married and single, mentioned this issue, as did some of their husbands as well. There are other citations in other tables, where their context in Muslim culture is not readily apparent, which would accentuate this conclusion and its importance. While the specific dynamics are different for single and married Brazilian female missionaries among Muslim peoples, both groups report significant difficulties in cultural adaptation. This is not a uniquely Brazilian issue, but it is a new issue for Brazilians as they expand their missionary vision to include unreached people groups. Not only the female missionaries, but their families and colleagues as well, would benefit from informed orientation on this matter during the training process.

Another issue that comes through in the interviews is the fact that three missionary families report significant difficulties for their children in the phase of cultural adaptation. Among the difficulties encountered were problems making friends, getting started in a new school that is very different, facing the prospect of home schooling and less contact with other children, and, in at least one case, serious depression. In a much more positive vein, three missionary parents said with great conviction that quality family life is itself a significant witness to the community, and that through the children and their activities missionary parents can make contacts in the host culture. Another issue to keep in mind is the fact that children tend to mirror their parents' true feelings, attitudes

and fears regarding the new culture, even if the parents themselves are good at hiding them.

As seen in two representative missionary comments in the following table, their instincts often led them to share their lives incarnationally with their adopted people, even without necessarily having received teaching on the importance of an incarnational lifestyle. The observation on the part of such missionaries that they needed more cultural studies to prepare them for this dimension of crosscultural service should not go unheeded.

As became evident in Chapter 3, Brazil is a diverse country that is still in search of a national cultural identity. The fact that it is so hard for Brazilians to define themselves becomes an issue as mission candidates prepare for the crosscultural experience. Craig Storti describes the stages of cultural awareness, which he names “unconscious incompetence” (blissful ignorance), “conscious incompetence” (troubling ignorance), “conscious competence” (deliberate sensitivity), and “unconscious competence” (spontaneous sensitivity). As Storti describes these stages, he demonstrates that growing crosscultural competence is characterized by, among other things, a growing awareness of differences between people from different cultures (Storti 1999:157-158).

If you do not know who you are, it follows that before you can become a sensitive, bi-cultural person, you need to learn about your own identity and how you have been influenced by your own cultural formation. One missionary comment contained in the following table articulates beautifully this process of growing self-awareness: “In leaving our homeland, we leave behind our status and ability; we have to depend on their



acceptance. I became aware of who I was. It is emotionally difficult to accept the challenge of self-knowing.”

One task of the missionary training experience, especially in light of the difficulty in defining themselves that Brazilians articulate, is to help students get in touch with, own and affirm their own cultural identity as a necessary first step in becoming aware of cultural differences between them and those in their host culture. It is the trainers’ task to set them on the road to self-knowing by helping them think consciously about their own self-identity, thus giving them a solid foundation for continuing to grow in crosscultural sensitivity on the field. Given their cultural realities, this is an especially important task for Brazilian missionary candidates during training.

The reader might take note of one statement located at the end of the table. Why would a missionary feel the need to affirm, “My theology did not change, but my practice did?” Since none of us has total knowledge of the truth about God, we should see our own theologies as in a constant state of growth and revision. If the crosscultural experience truly did not result in theological growth, that would be a pity. As Pannenberg showed, all our knowledge is provisional and anticipatory (1976:54-55; 1991:7). It could be that the missionary felt a need to defend new methods, strategies or practices with the affirmation that his theology remains the same. Trainers need to help candidates become so thoroughly grounded in the Word and in their relationship with Christ that they are not intimidated by the need to change some of their theological ideas as they learn and grow. As long as we have a solid biblical foundation, new perspectives on God’s truth can be welcomed. We can affirm that every culture offers us the possibility of new perspectives on God’s truth. Thus, while God’s truth never changes,

our own theology can and should be open to change and growth. If students are to ever help their national colleagues contextualize not only their methods but their theological perspective as well, it is imperative that they learn to embrace the kind of theological approach that is both committed to the Bible as normative yet open to new insight and understanding. In the comment cited in the table just above the aforementioned quotation, another missionary affirms that he “learned to interpret the Bible in accordance with the host culture, rather than from a Brazilian context.” Trainers need to think about how they can help all candidates get ready to read the Bible through a new set of cultural lenses while remaining faithful to the biblical witness. Below is an example of responses regarding the crosscultural component of training.

**Crosscultural Component**  
**Table # 2<sup>2</sup>**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Training Issues	<i>Training needs to have a stronger focus on culture shock, not just on dealing with the culture shock in moving from Brazil to the host culture, but from having mostly Christian contacts to living in a non-Christian environment where there is little contact with other Christians.</i>
	"I would like to have learned in training how to deal with culture shock. The professors in Brazil don't know about it because they have never experienced it! This is especially difficult because it is very hard for Brazilians to let go of their culture."
Adaptation	"I don't know if I am a Brazilian any more; I just know I was born in Brazil."
	"In leaving our homeland, we leave behind our status and ability; we have to depend on their acceptance. I became aware of who I was. It is emotionally difficult to accept the challenge of self-knowing."
	<i>It (the first months on the field) was the only time in my life I spent a month and a half in depression. I was taking care of children while my husband learned the language. Our preschool son had problems, shouting in school, which is contrary to his nature. I was stuck cleaning house and taking care of children, which spurred depression and held back my involvement in the culture and my adaptation. A wife can live in another world, alienated from ministry. Eventually, God opened doors for me to use my secular profession in a ministry role.</i>
Relational Style	"It was especially difficult for me not being able to communicate at first, because I am very extroverted."
	"What is most important in Brazil is not the truth, but relationships. In Brazil, relationships are everything; here, not so much. In Brazil, you would sacrifice anything for a relationship, even truth; that isn't so here."
Incarnational Lifestyle	<i>I needed more cultural studies—preparation for the painful process of laying aside your brazilianness to identify with your people.</i>
	"The family has to identify with the people. Our tendency would be to identify with missionaries. We see a lot of missionaries who live with the missionaries, not the people."
Language Learning	"To work with Arabs, you have to have contact and start language learning before going."
	Several missionaries said that they wished they had learned the language before going or, if that wasn't possible, any language.
Contextualized Theology	"I learned to interpret the Bible in accordance with the host culture, rather than from a Brazilian context."
	"My theology did not change, but my practice did."

<sup>2</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview Schedule, questions 4,5,6, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18, 22



## Saudade

The reader may remember that, in the last chapter, Joaquim Nabuco defined *saudade* with the four words remembrance, love, grief and longing. We saw as well that the Portuguese language gives the Brazilians a special word that conjures a unique emotional content, and communicates sentiments and concepts that foreigners can only approximate. Poignantly, Nabuco tells us that *saudade* is but another word for *solidade*, solitude.

It is that aspect of *saudade*—solitude—that stands out in the missionary comments contained in the table below. It is important to remember that any Brazilian away from home is going to feel *saudades*, but for those called to pioneer fields, with the isolation that implies, the sensation is intensified. It is therefore incumbent upon trainers and supervisors to prepare candidates for the realities they will face on the field, and to put into place structures that will give them the support they will need. One such structure is a healthy team. It will become clear in the discussion of teams below that teams can help Brazilian missionaries deal with *saudades*, but to do so effectively requires training.

However, missionaries also need deep personal emotional and spiritual resources to deal with intense experiences of solitude. Because solitude is an inherent part in the process of growing self-awareness that is such a vital part of the process of becoming bicultural, dealing with solitude is both inevitable and especially difficult for Brazilians. That is a training issue that must be addressed.

It is interesting that those being interviewed rarely used the word *saudade*. They usually spoke of its symptoms. When they did use the word, it was in a matter-of-fact

way. Are we to infer from this that *saudade* is not important? That would be a mistake. For example, to hear missionaries say, “I felt *saudades* for Brazil,” without elaboration or explanation, does not sound like much—unless you hear it through Brazilian or brazilianized ears, in which case it is a communication sent and received in a context that carries layers of understood meaning.

There was another indicator during the interviews that the concept of *saudade* was lurking frequently just below the surface. When asked about the effect of the missions experience on their families, missionaries would sometimes begin talking immediately about their extended family members back in Brazil. It was necessary to begin specifying in the interviews when the nuclear family’s experience was the frame of reference.

To close this section, the reader may want to note with particular attention the last comment in the table below. The missionary who said this has a story of faithfulness and perseverance known throughout Brazil. She lived through years of civil war, including eight months during which she “disappeared,” a captive of guerilla fighters. She endured the violence and privation of war, but the hardest adaptation for her was to the solitude: *Saudades for Brazil*.

Saudade  
Table # 3<sup>3</sup>

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Saudade and adjustment to the field	An experience that stimulated emotional growth was dealing with solitude, and learning to overcome it. “This was accentuated for us as Brazilian missionaries because most of the missionary force here speaks English.”
	“I felt a lot of <i>saudades</i> , and a feeling of uselessness (for the entire first year on the field). I had to learn to depend on God in my solitude and loneliness. During this time, I doubted my call.”
	“There is an emotional need when you are alone on the field, and all your friends are in Brazil.”
	“For me, the biggest difficulty is solitude. Brazilians like to party, and for this you have to be a part of a group. It seems that Brazilians search out other Brazilians more than other ex-pats seek out their compatriots. <i>Saudade</i> for home is very strong in Brazilians.”
	One single missionary reports that adaptation was an emotional challenge. “In the day-to-day, you are alone, because all your friends are in Brazil. I got through it, but I had some needs.”
	“I had to adapt to war, the culture, and especially to solitude.”

Brazilian Spiritual Ethos

This was an interesting category, because I was looking for evidence in the interview responses indicating that Brazilian missionaries carry with them some of the worldview attitudes so prevalent in Brazilian culture at large. Specifically, I was looking for indications of a pluralistic openness to other religions or for indications of missionaries who might show a tendency to compromise basic truths of the Christian faith, such as the uniqueness of Christ, through a process of syncretism or universalism.

<sup>3</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 6 & 22



To put it bluntly, there just was not any indication that the missionaries carried these influences of Brazilian culture inside them on an articulate level.

What became apparent were some affinities for traditional Brazilian worldview categories, which were discussed in the previous chapter. This was particularly evident in the way Brazilians take seriously the subject of spiritual conflict, following the Brazilian tendency to acknowledge the existence of middle-level spiritual beings, but going against the culture in viewing these beings as demonic rather than deities. The comment, “I have learned the reality of spiritual warfare,” has the sound of one who has learned the hard way, on the front lines. Historic Protestant groups would have a strong tendency to shy away from this subject, while more charismatic groups, in the Brazilian context especially, would give it great emphasis. Even so, the comment in the table below to the effect that missionaries had not seen anything in Brazil to compare with the demonic activity they encountered on their field demonstrates the intensity of the experience of spiritual conflict, which a number of missionaries from various traditions reported. During the interviews, eight missionaries broached the subject of spiritual conflict as part of their experience on the field, often repeatedly or at length.

Yet another issue raised during the interviews is that of preparing candidates to respond to the honest questions of people of other faiths. Before sending candidates to work with unreached peoples, a solid foundation in the Bible is a pre-requisite. Apologetics oriented toward specific issues raised by the host people’s dominant faith is a basic necessity.

Beyond that, trainers can help candidates in how they approach other religious faiths. Rather than learn how to criticize them from the outside, or comparing their worst with our best, candidates can be taught to learn the essence of other faiths from an emic perspective to the extent possible, without compromising their own testimony. While the Brazilian culture is quite open to many religious faiths, evangelical sub-culture is traditionally not only closed to those faiths, but often quite hostile. (This is not always so in the case of rank and file membership, many of whom have not been disciplined sufficiently to reject un-Christian elements of other religious systems.) Missionary candidates need to learn to look for where God is already at work among pre-Christian people, and see their host culture as a vehicle for communicating the Good News. The concept of redemptive analogies, and the doctrine of prevenient grace, can add a lot to the perspective of the average missions candidate.

One other word of caution is needed. The experienced Brazilian missionaries who participated in this research did not show evidence in their interview responses of common but unbiblical Brazilian tendencies to uncritically accept all expressions of religious faith as equally valid, or to syncretize them. Trainers can not assume from this, however, that all mission candidates would be equally solid. In the training process, trainers still need to bear in mind the influences to which candidates have been exposed in the national culture, and work to help them identify and develop any points that need attention. Below are listed some examples of the spiritual issues that developed as missionaries encountered new spiritual perspectives and realities on the mission field.

**Brazilian Spiritual Ethos**  
**(Syncretism and Pluralism; Pre-modern Worldview and Mysticism)**  
**Table # 4<sup>4</sup>**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Attitude toward other religions	“Muslims ask questions that provoke growth. More specific training would have been very helpful.”
	“They mess with demons and lies. I needed to have studied the Bible and prayed more.”
Spiritual Conflict	“I have learned the reality of spiritual warfare.”
	<i>Contact with Islam provoked profound questions about the basis of truth, nature of Scripture, reliability of the Bible, divinity of Christ, the trinity. You can’t simply ignore the questions, because eventually it will catch up with you.</i>
	“Affirm the importance of your spiritual life, because you will enter a spiritual battle.”
	<i>We seek God more. Demons attack various teams. It happened with a Canadian missionary, on a team from a Brazilian mission, and others, all in the same week. It is a confrontation. It is different from experiences in Brazil—none of us had similar experiences in Brazil.</i>
	On the field, “The spiritual battle is palpable.”
Pre-modern Worldview; faith healing, mysticism, spiritual ethos	Perceived God responding to prayer. A missionary reports that on the day of leaving due to civil war, he sensed the presence of angels watching over the family and learning later that many churches and individuals had been praying.
	<i>For a period of three years on the field, we had nothing but physical problems. One child had respiratory problems and was divinely cured. We pray now for health every day, and God is protecting us.</i>

Superficiality of Brazilian Religiosity

The survey of Brazilian culture indicated that while interest in spiritual things is very high in the culture, the level of commitment tends to be shallow, based on emotion and personal interest, and that often people will spread out their allegiance among groups with very different beliefs. My personal experience in Brazil, together with frank

<sup>4</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 4 & 6



conversations I have had with close Brazilian Christian friends, is consistent with this cultural assessment found in the literature.

However, the nature of these interviews is to focus primarily on the missionary's own experience, not the level of religious experience and commitment common in the culture at large. The interview research focused, then, on an atypical, highly committed group. They demonstrated themselves to be people who have a deep Christian commitment and love for the Lord. That is not to say that their spiritual lives have no room for improvement, or even that they are always up to the daunting tasks that they have tackled. So while in the other categories explored in this chapter the research goal is to see if the interview data confirms what has been indicated in the literature through the reporting of those interviewed, the approach in this category is different. Here, the object is through the interviews to explore some of the spiritual issues that are relevant to missionary well-being and effectiveness in ministry, with a goal of identifying some training implications for these realities. Nevertheless, the reader should understand the discussion to follow against the backdrop of a theme established in the literature on Brazilian culture.

Emotionalism and the need for long-term commitment are inter-related issues. Commitments to missions made at altar calls may be based more on emotion than call, and may have little to do with a person's long-term capacity or willingness to prepare for the field, adapt to the culture, establish relationships, endure hardship, and produce fruit over time. One piece of the agenda for those training mission candidates, therefore, has to be making sure that their commitment level is up to the task. This relates to another recurring theme in the interviews, which was the need for missionaries to make sure of

their call before leaving for the field. This must be a focus in the personal spiritual development of each candidate during training.

Twenty-five missionaries responded to question thirteen in the Missionary Interview Schedule, which asks them to compare their devotional life in Brazil and on the field. Twenty-one of the missionaries report that, due to the pressures of cultural adjustment, spiritual isolation, and the demands of the work, they became more dependent on God and their devotional life became deeper on the field. There were two missionaries who had the opposite experience, finding a devotional life more difficult because of how busy they became with the pressures and responsibilities on the field. Two missionaries reported that their devotional life remained about the same, although one of these admitted that he saw the need for a deeper devotional life, even though it had not happened in his experience. Given the almost unanimous sense on the part of the missionaries that they needed a deeper devotional life to cope with field realities, there seems to be little doubt about the need to provide a strong focus during training on developing the candidates' devotional life.

Interview data reveals that missionaries experienced a wide range of emotional and spiritual difficulties, sometimes serious enough for the missionary to have felt the need for pastoral counseling or other spiritual support. Fourteen missionaries mentioned specific issues that were rooted in, or exacerbated by, cultural factors such as female status/role issues in male-dominated societies (with two men relating that this was a primary cause of their wives entering in major depression), dealing with solitude, religious differences, cultural differences and culture shock (including three families for whom culture shock in their children was a major problem), feelings of uselessness,

conflicts with local Christian leaders, governmental repression and other forms of physical danger, cultural differences on international teams, and one reported marital crisis.

Twelve respondents indicated that concrete spiritual and pastoral support from their agency is weak or non-existent, compared to seven who indicated it was fair or good. Some missionaries obviously depend on support from others and miss it when it does not come, while others understand how difficult it is to provide that support and are committed to making it on their own. Equilibrium between these extreme positions comes as one recognizes both that missionaries need prayer and other forms of support from their community of faith, while at the same time recognizing that in the final analysis we are all responsible for our spiritual well being. It is easy to overdo the emphasis on self-reliance, forgetting the importance of life in community, but missionaries need to recognize that it was God, not the agency or local church, that called them to the field, and that they need to look to God to sustain them.

Also, there was a frequent mention of the need to be prepared to face hardship. All twenty-six missionaries named various difficulties that they had confronted on the field. Culture shock and the process of enculturation received the highest number of mentions—fifteen out of twenty-six missionaries. Following, in order of decreasing frequency, were language issues, solitude, financial difficulties, status and role issues, problems with teams, dealing with mission administrators who did not understand field realities because they had never been missionaries, family issues, spiritual conflict, war and other physical dangers, illness, *immediatismo* and dealing with the different level of responsiveness on the mission field compared to Brazil, the process of self-discovery



provoked by the crosscultural experience (which one missionary called the “existential crisis”), primitive conditions, pressures of the work, and character formation. Training can and should help mission candidates get ready for these unavoidable field realities through experiences that stimulate emotional, psychological, missiological and spiritual growth. Anything less is a disservice to them and to the church.

Before closing this section of the chapter, I want to emphasize that consistently I found the level of commitment, spiritual depth, and, at times, the pure courage of Brazilian missionaries to be an inspiration to me throughout the interview process. The pejorative-sounding designation of this category is derived from a common trait in general Brazilian culture, of which we must be aware during the process of training and candidate evaluation, but which in no sense implies a judgment on the missionaries themselves. Some of the spiritual dynamics encountered by Brazilian missionaries on the field are chronicled below.

**Superficiality of Brazilian Religiosity**  
**Table #5<sup>5</sup>**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Emotionalism	<p>"I've always had ups and downs—before and after going to the field. Maybe the biggest difference is that while before it was more emotional, now the presence of God is penetrating more my inner being."</p> <p>"There's a certain fantasy, unrealistic, immature quality to our culture."</p>
Need for long-term commitment	<p>One missionary reports consistent, sustained support from Brazilian churches made up of systematic prayer, literature, visits, and communication, and claims, "That's what has kept me on the field."</p> <p>"We lack commitment. The Brazilian really is a little vague on what that means."</p>
Need/Desire for Deeper Spiritual Life	Specific expressions of heightened dependence on God while on the field were numerous. "On the field I feel more need for God, and learned to seek him more and depend more on him."
Need Theology of Suffering in face of Persecution, Privation	Four missionaries shared with me stories of war, persecution, and spiritual conflict that involved prolonged suffering and the threat of imminent death and martyrdom. Their faithfulness stands as irrefutable evidence against any attempts to generalize, characterizing Brazilian missionaries as soft in the face of difficulties.
Need for spiritual care	<p><i>Our agency is very much present in out lives, and this is a significant spiritual and pastoral support.</i></p> <p>"When I get correspondence from my agency, it's either to ask for a report or to prepare me for a cut in financial support. In -- years, we only received one personal correspondence for the purpose of support."</p> <p>Agency Executive's Take: "The missionary needs pastoral care, but we can't be baby sitters. The missionary needs to take up the cross."</p>
Need for holistic gospel	<i>We need to pay a lot of attention to the spiritual preparation of the candidate. Character will determine our posture on the field. This can either establish or destroy the ministry and the missionary. This ought to be part of the training. Muslims are very holistic.... A holy, integrated life is the best testimony for a Muslim. In the West, we lose this focus, dividing the spiritual from the material.</i>
	"Without a theology of the kingdom, the denomination will always be the primary reference point. Experience on the pioneer field will give a new perspective, but I am not sure that the Brazilian missionaries will learn. Denominational agencies want to recreate denominational churches on the field. This is not a question of flexibility or adjustment of strategy; it is a theological issue. We need a wide-open theology of the kingdom of God and a good biblical theology of mission. If we are able to do this, Brazil will be a valuable instrument for fulfilling the Great Commission."

<sup>5</sup> Responses come from Missionary Interview Form questions #6, 7, 13, 14, 16, 24

### Brazilian Ethnic Diversity

When people in Brazil start talking about crosscultural mission, it is almost inevitable that eventually someone will make the point that Brazilians can go anywhere in the world and fit in, identifying with the local people. This is because the ethnic diversity and miscegenation so characteristic of Brazil assures that there are Brazilians of every physical type imaginable. What Brazilians are saying about this has an important element of truth. If a missionary's physical appearance does not create a barrier in the minds of the people, that is a plus.

The danger exists, however, that Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders will make the mistaken supposition that superficial similarities like racial features facilitates identification and contextualization. This betrays an unwarranted assumption by some in the Brazilian mission movement that physical similarities imply cultural similarities. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Winston Churchill's famous observation comes to mind, that the English and Americans are two peoples divided by a common language.

False assumptions about supposed similarities can blind missionaries and leaders to real and important cultural differences. A lack of verbalization of this reality during the interviews could indicate that the Brazilian missiological community is not as cognizant of its importance as it should be. Below, the reader will find some of the thoughts expressed on this subject by Brazilian missionaries and their leadership.



Brazilian Ethnic Diversity  
Table #6<sup>6</sup>

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Brazilians “ <i>tem cara do mundo</i> ”—they look like the world	The Brazilian missionary enjoys great success in identifying with many peoples because it is the country of soccer and miscegenation; the Brazilian is known for soccer and Carnaval.
	An agency executive said: “We are a mixture of many nations, which gives us the capacity to adapt in other cultures. We have, for example, descendants of Japanese in Japan, grandchildren of Slavs in Ukraine, Arabs in the Middle East. This helps a lot in the transmission of the gospel.”
The Hidden Danger: superficial similarities could hide real cultural differences	Agency Executive: <i>Due to miscegenation, Brazilian missionaries have a great facility for contextualization and identification.</i>
	A trainer said: “Miscegenation gives us greater capacity to adapt to other cultures.”

Jeito

As Chapter 3 indicated, *jeito* is what makes things work in Brazil. It is a way of getting around difficulties and creating solutions to unfair, unjust, or disagreeable situations. But it is also a way of reaching for special advantage that often crosses the ethical line. For better or worse, *jeito* is such an indelible part of Brazilian culture that it has become a part of who Brazilian missionaries are.

This creates a dilemma for the Brazilian missionary. There will always be opportunities on the mission field to use the creativity inherent in *jeito*. In many cases, it will serve the missionary well. But it is true as well that there is an ethical line which *jeito* always seems to be on the verge of crossing, at best. In another culture, the Brazilian missionary’s sense of where that line is will not be as sure. Brazilian

<sup>6</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview Schedule, question 21

missionaries making too free a use of *jeito* easily can cross that line unawares, bringing disrepute to themselves and to the gospel.

There is another potential pitfall of *jeito*. When missionaries rely too much on their ability to improvise creatively on the spur of the moment, long-range planning can easily be shunted aside. Candidates should be trained to use their creativity within the context of serious planning. Both are necessary.

The first response on Table 7 is one that should give pause to trainers. “I didn’t use anything from training when I got to the field. Brazilians don’t work that way.” It is one thing to not use training because it was inadequate. But would this missionary have used his training had it been good training? It is not true that no Brazilian will ever use his or her training on the field, no matter how good and relevant it was. But nevertheless, there is an element in this missionary’s statement that rings true. Culturally, many Brazilians are always going to be tempted to trust their own inspired creativity on the spur of the moment. This can be true in the most rigid and exacting environments. In July of 2004, for example, I visited CST, the largest steel-producing plant and port in the world, located in Vitória, Espírito Santo. It is a first-class operation in every respect. Even there, however, workers needed to be reminded by management not to follow their cultural instincts. At a central location inside the complex, occupying a large peninsula of several square kilometers in size, the company had placed a huge billboard. On it, a message was emblazoned for all the passing workers to see and heed: “DO NOT IMPROVISE! FOLLOW STANDARD PROCEDURES!”

It is not the function of training to stifle the natural creativity of Brazilian missionaries. Hopefully, however, trainers can find ways to help candidates get to the

point where, as missionaries on the field, their creativity will be shaped and informed by solid missiological principles and insight. The table below chronicles some of the positive and negative aspects of *jeito* for Brazilian missionaries.

**Jeito**  
**Table # 7<sup>7</sup>**

<b>Sub-Category</b>	<b>Interview Responses</b>
Creativity & Spontaneity	<i>Making the gospel a viable alternative for my people is my primary responsibility. I didn't use anything from training when I got to the field. Brazilians don't work that way. We use our emotional creativity (spontaneity). We get there, see the needs, and go from there.</i>
	<i>With jeito, the Brazilian missionary is able to make do and find a way around problems.</i>
	<i>A highly respected veteran who has endured great hardship said that the Brazilian missionary, if well-prepared, adapts well because of coming from a culture of improvisation; also, Brazilians are able to adapt to precarious conditions because Brazil is a third-world country.</i>
Ethical Dangers	<i>Even though jeito can be used positively as a creative way to adapt, Brazilian jeitinho ends up denigrating the Brazilian missionary (the respondent says that without crosscultural training, the missionary will use jeitinho in a negative way.)</i>
	<i>A trainer said that the Brazilian attitude is, including missionaries, "If things don't please me, I'll use jeito."</i>
	<i>A trainer also said, "I see a difference between creativity and jeitinho. With creativity, you establish new points of reference (standards); in jeitinho, you twist existing standards."</i>
	<i>An agency director says that jeito is a cultural barrier for the Brazilian missionary. It represents an ethical problem for them, but on the other hand can be an advantage (as Brazilians use jeito to reach creative solutions to problems). He describes jeito as a pervasive, driving force in Brazilian culture—what in anthropological terms would be called a cultural imperative.</i>

<sup>7</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview Schedule, questions 11, 21, 22



### Imediatismo

*Imediatismo*, the Brazilian cultural characteristic of looking for immediate results without adequate attention to long-term issues, affects the Brazilian mission movement at various points. First, there is a rush on the part of both new missionaries and their agency leaders to forego or shortchange training in an effort to get to the field and begin producing in the shortest time possible. This produces immediate negative consequences, including culture shock, insufficient time given to learn the local language and culture after arrival on the field, and serious cultural mistakes in relating to nationals. Its rippling, long-term effects include the lack of ability to contextualize the gospel and plant indigenous churches, broken relationships, ineffectiveness, confusion, frustration, and high return rates for missionaries.

Trainers are especially concerned about the need to address issues of character formation and spiritual maturity during training. Five out of six trainers interviewed specifically mentioned these issues as a primary need of Brazilian mission candidates in order to be truly prepared for the field. This perspective gives trainers a different level of understanding about the purpose of training, which candidates and agency leaders may not share. If personal development really is a priority in preparing Brazilian missionaries to be ready for the field, then it is no longer appropriate to think of training as a time merely to impart theoretical and practical information. That task can be accomplished relatively quickly. It takes more time to help candidates identify and work through issues of personal and spiritual growth.

Obviously, there is linkage between the need to take the time necessary for personal growth to occur, and the pressures of *immediatismo*. Speaking of this linkage, the director of one of Brazil's leading missionary training institutions observes, "We have to be spiritually prepared not to revert to these cultural characteristics. We are in a big hurry to do things. If someone receives a (missionary) call today, they want to leave for the field today. God has a sense of urgency; we Brazilians are hurried.... When candidates leave quickly, they come back quickly, without accomplishing anything. The churches lose confidence in the work of missions, we lose missionaries, we lose money. The Brazilian hurry does not alter God's urgency in the work of mission."

Even when Brazilian missionaries avoid this trap, either through training, the counsel of other missionaries, or a high degree of perceptivity on their part, they very often suffer (and not just figuratively speaking) from the unrealistic pressures of home churches and agencies. Since so many mission agencies in Brazil are relatively new, even agency leadership in a good number of cases may not have a realistic sense of the differences between preaching Christ in Brazil, one of the most responsive fields in the world, and among an unreached people group. Churches that are investing sacrificially in a missionary will be even more likely to have unrealistic expectations, often because nobody in a place of authority has told them what to expect. Below is a sample of responses that demonstrate the presence and impact of *immediatismo* on the Brazilian mission movement.

**Imediatismo**  
**Table # 8<sup>8</sup>**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Planning	“My culture suffers from a short-term vision.”
	<i>The imediatismo of the Brazilian is very serious. Neither the missionary nor the agency has the patience necessary because of their emotionalism and amateurism. They have to interpret things on the field from the perspective of the missionary culture, not the host culture.</i>
Taking time for training	“We need to give the time necessary to gain crosscultural understanding, rather than be in too great a rush to get numbers to the field.”
	“Take the time to prepare yourselves. A lot of Brazilian agencies rush people to the field, and they don’t last a year. They arrive without preparation and without conviction of their call.”
Agency Expectations	“My agency and supporting church recognize that the most important thing is not numbers, but faithful presence.”
	“They do not demand numerical results, but effort and faithfulness. That’s fair.”
	“My agency and supporters expect success. I do not think their expectations are reasonable. How do they define success? They want us to reach the world for Christ right away, without their having to put their hand in their wallet or even pray.”
	<i>The expectations of my agency and supporting churches gets into cultural factors. The demand for immediate results is a characteristic of Brazilian culture, and this presents problems for me. There can be a demand for visible results. This has improved with time, as I have educated them about field realities and as they have grown to know me and trust my character.... Now the expectations are realistic, though at the first they were based on Brazilian realities.</i>
	“In Brazil, believers have no idea what it is like being a Christian in a non-Christian country, and they have expectations based on Brazilian realities. This puts us under tremendous, unrealistic pressure. I recently asked my wife—how would it be received if we sent in a report saying we had 10 professions of faith? On the field, we see it as a great victory, but in Brazil [do they see it the same way?] We desire to see multitudes come to Jesus, but right now one or two people is a joy as great as a thousand.”
	“They expected numbers, and became upset when I decided to focus on building relationships. The expectations are not reasonable. The work there is slow and difficult, and the pressure to produce numbers hurts the missionary.” (This missionary is now with a new agency.)

<sup>8</sup> Responses come from Missionary Interview form questions #4, 8, 10, 15, 16



## Home & Street: In Which Domain do we do Missions?

Chapter 3 explored the significance of two social domains, house and street.

These domains exist in tension with one another, and have differing rules. In evaluating missionary responses to various questions, it became clear that one of the dynamics at work within the Brazilian missions movement is precisely the interplay between these two domains. What exactly is the relationship between agency leaders and missionaries, or between team leaders and team members, or within the team itself? What set of rules apply? Judging from responses received in the interviews with both missionaries and agency leaders, it appears that there is no clear definition.

It seems that leaders assume that street rules apply. In other words, the business of the mission is *business*, at least in terms of who makes the decisions and the rules, with the accompanying expectations that missionaries will obey their decisions and rules. Remembering the discussion in Chapter 3 about the responsibility of leaders for the actions of their underlings in a hierarchical, high-context culture, this posture is to be expected. However, the missionaries' language belies an expectation that they be treated, not as individuals, cogs in the system, but as persons, valued members of a family. This position also is consistent with the theory postulated in the last chapter that those on the lower end of a social relationship appeal to the humanizing language of the home.

This in itself represents a situation rife with possibilities for misunderstanding and tension. It is exacerbated by the fact that in Brazil, many leaders in the agencies with authority over the missionaries have neither field experience as missionaries or missiological training. Even so, remembering Hall's observation that in high-context

cultures, people in positions of authority are always responsible for the actions of those under them, these mission leaders are accountable for the decisions, actions, and effectiveness of missionaries serving under them. Naturally, they will want their instructions followed. When these leaders, often without field experience or missiological training themselves, operate out of the culturally appropriate hierarchical rules of the street, making decisions and telling missionaries what they can and cannot do, they have a credibility problem with the missionaries, who appeal as members of the mission “family” to the rules governing the domain of the home.

For example, one missionary, when asked about her training experience, used this question as an opportunity to express in animated fashion her frustration, not with her training, but with her agency leadership and their lack of training. She said that not only does no one in the agency know her specific field, but that they did not even have experience as missionaries, did not know anything about security, did not know anything about her reality, and did not have any missiological training. There is no other Brazilian missionary serving where she does. Even with all this, she said, she had to obey her leadership, even though they did not know anything at all about her situation. She went on to comment how good it would be if someone from her agency did what I was doing in interviewing her—simply listening to the stresses and the reality of being a missionary on her field. In other words, she wanted to be in relationship, able to talk as one person to another, and know that she was heard, instead of being treated like an individual, a nobody.

In this tension between missionaries and their home leadership, the missionaries have another recourse. As the reader may have noticed in the table above, missionaries might take the attitude described by one trainer in this way: “If things don’t please me, I’ll use *jeito*.” Judging from comments heard over the last few years from agency leaders and missionary trainers, Brazilian missionaries can be experts at using *jeito* to get around rules they do not like.

There is another culturally-based reason for the obvious tension that exists between missionaries and mission leadership. Chapter 3 pointed out that in Brazilian culture, rules and laws are made for those who do not have connections. Those who do have connections and influence—in other words, those who are “persons”—do not, to the extent they are connected, have to follow the rules that apply to everyone else. In other words, Brazilian missionaries who flaunt mission rules and leaders’ instructions may be doing so, at least in some cases, as a way of asserting their personhood. They are not individuals, “John Nobodies,” that have to follow the rules unfailingly because they are unconnected.

There are a number of other issues that come to light in the interviews which are relevant to this broad category. One of the most important is the missionaries’ reactions to the loss of former status and role which they had attained in Brazil. During training, it will help candidates to learn that their sense of personal identity and worth comes from their relationship to God and their involvement in God’s mission in the world, not from worldly values. With this in mind, they will be able to go to the field with the attitude of learners, and choose subsequent status and role identities on the basis of what will be



most effective in reaching those to whom God has called them, not on the basis of their ego needs.

Brazilian missionaries' high-context cultural needs are evident also in their desire to feel connected. They miss their family and network of friends, on whom they could depend in times of trouble. Also, there was one instance in which the missionary admitted that he had difficulty "getting his situation legalized." In other words, he entered the country on *jeito*, hoping to figure out a more permanent solution later. The lack of a network of connections made the process more difficult. If the first Brazilian missionaries can enter a country through partnerships with international agencies involved in pioneer work, this would meet their need for connections right from the start. More important, however, is the expression of loss conveyed by missionaries describing their initial period of adjustment to the field: "At the start, I was a nobody." This will be a common reaction among Brazilian missionaries, because in Brazilian culture a person's identity is inextricably tied to their relationships. Being cut off from their network of relationships presents an even more serious identity crisis for Brazilian missionaries than it does for their North American counterparts.

Family needs surfaced in a variety of ways during the course of the interviews. Through the testimony of missionaries, we see that the quality of Christian family life can have an evangelistic impact, even in places where aggressive preaching is not possible, or may be counterproductive. Also, families can find facing adversity together to be a rich bonding experience.

In asking about the impact of the missionary experience on their families, a North American would naturally expect answers dealing with the missionaries' nuclear families. Some of those kinds of responses were forthcoming, to be sure, but there were also some unexpected responses. Missionaries used this question as an opportunity to talk about the effect their missionary experience had on extended family members who stayed in Brazil. These are concerns in the minds of mission candidates of which trainers need to be aware.

A final family note is to draw attention to the fact that five female missionaries spoke with considerable feeling about the difficult adjustment they faced in dealing with their new status and role as women in Muslim cultures. While the Moors had an influence on Portuguese and Brazilian family life, and while some of these influences are still detectable and relevant, the status of women has changed drastically in Brazil in recent decades due to Western influences. Female missionaries going to serve among Muslims need to be informed and prepared for what they might face, in order to save them some of the difficulties and heartaches faced by some of the trailblazers who were interviewed during the course of this project.

Lastly in this section, it should be noted that some of the expressions of the missionaries' need for spiritual care, listed in Table 5, are also relevant for this section. Both missionary and mission executive attitudes toward spiritual care for the missionaries reflect something of the home/street tension between the two groups, revealing assumptions about which domain is applicable to relationships within the mission.

Following are some interview responses that illustrate the issues discussed in this category.

## Home & Street: In Which Domain do we do Missions?

Table # 9<sup>9</sup>

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Family	<p>"I learned the value of the family in my host culture, and the value of our family in communicating the gospel. Among our people, decisions are not individual, but made in solidarity. The family is a key. This has great implications for evangelism."</p> <p><i>Due to experiences on the field, the family is more united and concerned about how they can help each other.</i></p> <p>"I was concerned because I left my father back in Brazil shortly after my mother's death."</p>
Persons/Individuals (A cultural status & role issue)	<p><i>Arriving on the field, I felt useless, incapable, like a nobody. This messes with your emotions. You have to submit to a new reality, in my case limiting myself to working with women and children (because of the Muslim culture). Even so, I feel it's unjust.</i></p> <p>"At the start, I was a nobody."</p> <p>"I went through a grave identity crisis, close to pathological. I had been a dynamic pastor and university professor, and all of a sudden I was a language student, and they treated me like a first-year student."</p>
Private/Public	SEE APPENDIX 6
Need to be Connected	<p>"When you're in a country without friends or family, you have to depend on the Lord. I learned to pray, and many difficulties took me to the foot of the cross."</p> <p>"In the beginning, we had visa problems and it took quite some time to get our situation legalized."</p>
Hierarchy; Relationship to Agency	<p>"Training needs to focus more on missiology and missions, and less on the authority of the organization."</p> <p>A missionary among a Muslim people group said, "My reality is unique, without any other Brazilian. I have to obey my leadership even if they don't know the first thing about my reality, about the culture on the field."</p> <p>"Coordinators that were never missionaries don't understand anything."</p> <p>An agency leader, asked about the need for pastoral care among missionaries of his agency, took off in another direction, saying that there was a tendency toward independence in the missionary in the sense of having difficulty in submitting to leadership.</p>

<sup>9</sup> Responses come from Missionary Interview form questions #4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16



### Brazilian Culture & Teams

Interviews show that the overwhelming majority of those who responded directly to the question concerning whether they preferred to work in teams or individually, preferred to work in teams. Of this group, twenty expressed a clear preference for teams, while two responded that it depended on the situation. Not one respondent claimed to prefer working alone. However, among those who stated that they preferred to work in teams, there were some caveats to the effect that it would need to be a group with healthy team dynamics. This preference was particularly accentuated for work in pioneer settings. In such a situation, in the words of one missionary, "Working alone would be suicide."

Nevertheless, team relationships can be both a blessing and a curse. One respondent who saw her own team as a great blessing still was of the opinion that Brazilian missionaries should work individually, rather than in teams. When asked why, she replied that hers was the only healthy team of which she was aware in her entire agency. All the others she knew anything about were riddled with strife and dissension. It appears, on the basis of interview responses, that Brazilian missionaries have a common concern about isolation on a pioneer field, seeing the fellowship of a team as necessary for emotional and spiritual survival, while at the same time fearing internal dissension and the desire of some missionaries to force their way into positions of prestige, recognition, and leadership.

These comments clarified for me something I did not understand. The literature on Brazilian culture, as well as missionaries I interviewed, often spoke of Brazilian individualism. I was not convinced, because my concept of individualism is North American, based on the idea of the hardy pioneer striking out to make it on his or her

own. That does not fit Brazilian culture, where everything is relational. What I discovered, listening to the interview responses and reflecting on them later, is that Brazilians have a different kind of individualism. Brazil is still a relational culture, and people always sense that they need others. Brazilian individualism consists, therefore, not of isolationism, but of efforts to assert oneself within a group.

International teams present their own dynamics. In particular, it should be noted that the culture shock that comes from having to adapt to an international team can be just as debilitating as the culture shock that comes as a result of adapting to the host culture. In addition, Brazilians often feel that they are not taken seriously enough within an international team. This widespread sentiment was expressed succinctly by the missionary who observed, “On an international team, the Brazilian is always at the bottom.” The dynamics at play here correspond to the Brazilian identity crisis and struggle to overcome unwarranted feelings of inferiority, both of which were discussed in Chapter 3.

There seems to be a sense of expectation that an international team will have a more organized, goal-oriented style. It could be argued that an international team, if it overcomes the internal cultural issues, could benefit from combining North American or European strengths of administration and goal orientation with the Brazilian strength of creativity, flexibility and developing relationships.

The more extensive version of the table on Brazilian Culture and Teams, located in Appendix 8, includes a comment from a missionary which reveals an underlying assumption of intimacy that is part of her expectations of team dynamics. This comment is illustrative of a pervasive sense among Brazilian missionaries that the team should

function as a type of extended family for missionaries separated from family and friends back in Brazil. Failure to understand what that means can result in serious misunderstandings and strained relationships (see Appendix 6).

Many of the positive benefits of working in teams are lost simply because missionaries have usually had no effective orientation to living and working in intimate proximity with one another. Paying attention to developing the character and spiritual life of candidates will help. However, specific preparation for working and relating to one another in teams is called for. When the team will be international, this need becomes magnified even more. The table below reveals something of the reality of mission teams as experienced by Brazilians.



## Brazilian Culture and Teams

Table # 10<sup>10</sup>

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Team Dynamics	A significant number reported that their team provided a needed system of spiritual support on the field.
	A significant number also reported that team dynamics were a source of tension and conflict. For some, the team provided by the agency to support the missionary became the missionary's biggest problem.
	A single female missionary reports, "For me, the team has become family."
	<i>Emotionally and socially it is good to be in a team, but Brazilians don't always work best in a team....Everyone should be a servant, but questions of status and leadership arise, and it gets difficult.</i>
	"Brazilian missionaries fight a lot—not over theology, but methodology." However, "International fights are worse yet."
International Team Dynamics	One missionary reported emotional problems-serious at first, especially related to issues of culture shock—not so much culture shock from the host culture (the missionary said, "I was prepared for that"), but the culture shock that came from working as part of an international team.
	"On an international team, the Brazilian is always at the bottom."
High-Low Context Issues	"The North American and Brazilian cultures do not combine well enough to permit transparency...The Brazilian tendency is to take things personally and not separate work issues from cultural issues" (see Appendix 3).
	(Agency executive speaking) "Brazil is a relational culture. In a team, the Brazilian talks, touches, expresses himself. Other cultures are individualist. When we put them together to work, it creates a strong shock. Training today has to emphasize anthropology and sociology [to help us deal with these kinds of issues]. Secular executives value it; we don't."
Prefer Team or Individual Ministry?	Most Brazilian missionaries surveyed said that they preferred working on a team to working on their own, due to the mutual support and accountability that a team offers. One missionary put it succinctly: "Working alone (on a pioneer field) would be suicide." Another said, "To work with unreached people groups, it is not possible without being part of a team."
	One Brazilian responded that Brazilians work better in teams, because "Brazilians need the group."
	"Among the unreached, we need teams."
	One respondent who found her team to be a blessing said that Brazilians generally should work individually, because her team was the only one she knew of in the entire agency that was working out.

<sup>10</sup> Responses come from Missionary Interview form questions 7, 17-20

Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission

The table below corresponding to this category is a composite of responses drawn from questions regarding characteristics of Brazilian culture and Brazilian missionaries put to the missionaries themselves, agency executives, and trainers. The most striking thing about these lists is the remarkable similarity between them and issues raised in the Chapter 3 overview of Brazilian culture and in other aspects of the interviews with the missionaries, which were presented earlier in this chapter.

These lists were compiled from the interview data only after completing the chapter on Brazilian culture and after developing the categories used in this chapter, by sifting through other sections of the interview questions. They thus constitute pieces of corresponding evidence, indicating that issues identified to this point are indeed issues that matter in the culturally contextualized approach to missionary training advocated in these pages.

Separate and complete tables categorizing the responses of each group are contained in the appendices. Following is a brief composite of the various responses.



**Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission:**  
**Composite Responses of Missionaries, Executives and Trainers**  
**Table 11**

<b>Characteristics that Facilitate Mission</b>	<b>Characteristics that Present Challenges</b>
<i>Enthusiasm for the work (i.e., emotion)</i>	<i>Lacks commitment to match enthusiasm</i>
<i>Jeito can be an advantage for Brazilian missionaries in getting things done</i>	<i>Jeito also presents ethical problems (calls jeito a cultural imperative)</i>
<i>Transparency</i>	<i>Sensuality</i>
<i>Compassionate, self-giving</i>	<i>Triumphalism</i>
<i>Creative</i>	<i>Too prone to improvisation</i>
<i>Flexible, adaptable</i>	<i>Lack of crosscultural training</i>
<i>Extroverted, highly social</i>	<i>Feel very strongly the lack of family and friends; prone to depression over this</i>
<i>Open to the fantastic (i.e., mystical)</i>	<i>Lack of pastoral care</i>
<i>Strong spiritual focus in the culture</i>	<i>False expectations of quick results</i>
<i>Contagious joy and happiness</i>	<i>Lack of spiritual maturity and character</i>
<i>Can identify with people suffering great economic hardship</i>	<i>The Brazilian missionary easily becomes frustrated in cultures where it is hard to develop intimacy</i>
<i>They believe that God is the God of the impossible</i>	<i>Brazilian imediatismo</i>
<i>The Brazilian missionary is very tied to his/her family</i>	<i>Brazilians are very social; they feel saudades much more than other cultures</i>
<i>Other peoples accept Brazilians—they are not identified with a threatening world power</i>	<i>Often takes too much of Brazilian culture—many times without realizing it</i>
<i>Hot-blooded—has the spirit to take on challenges (but can end up burning out)</i>	<i>Lacks staying power</i>
<i>Miscegenation gives us greater capacity to adapt to other cultures (repeated often)</i>	<i>Failure to respect the culture of others</i>
<i>Improvisation</i>	<i>The idea that Brazilians are different, something special: because they have soccer and jeito, they think they can do anything</i>
<i>Facility in making friends across cultures</i>	<i>The ingenuity to think that seminary training qualifies someone for any work in the ministry</i>
<i>They come from churches that are alive, with contagious worship, devotion, and evangelism</i>	<i>Fragmented evangelicalism (we take denominational divisions to the mission field)</i>
<i>Ability to accept difficulties and limitations</i>	<i>Nationalism is a problem—we want to plant churches like churches in Brazil</i>
<i>The event/time orientation is similar between the Brazilian and Arab cultures</i>	<i>Too many abandon the call and return to Brazil</i>



### Summary of the Chapter

Chapter 4 has reported on the results of interview research with Brazilian missionaries, agency executives, and missionary trainers. On the basis of this research data, the chapter offered a series of ten broad categories and lists of cultural characteristics of Brazilian missionaries that, together, presented an extensive overview of issues that are important to understanding the dynamics of the Brazilian mission movement. These issues form the basis of an agenda for missionary training in Brazil, which is the subject of Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### A Culturally-Based Agenda for Brazilian Missionary Training

#### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter applies research findings to developing a model for missionary training appropriate for the Brazilian context. First, the chapter highlights some of the lessons learned during the course of the research process. Second, the model is outlined by delineating a series of six broad categories of training needs. Third, the chapter describes the source of the data used in developing each category, and the process used in organizing it. Fourth, a particularly Brazilian approach to each of the six categories is developed, which can be used to inform the training experience for Brazilian mission candidates.

#### Research Lessons

A number of things have been learned during the course of this research about the Brazilian mission movement and the context in which Brazilian mission candidates must be trained. After each of the lessons listed below, the reader will find page numbers in parentheses, corresponding to the page numbers in this dissertation which contain material relevant to the lesson being highlighted.

1. Effective missionary training is predicated on a belief that it is worth the time and money, on the part of the candidate, the agency, and the supporting church. This belief runs counter to the prevailing cultural current of *immediatismo*. (182-184)

2. Effective missionary training is predicated on filling the need for more qualified trainers—meaning that they have both good, advanced missiological training, and that they have been well-adapted, productive missionaries on the field. (157-158; 160)
3. A primary concern of many missionaries is that too many agency leaders do not have the background of field experience and advanced missiological studies needed to make sound missiological decisions that affect them and their ministries. This undermines the confidence of the missionaries in their leadership. (185-187, 190, Appendix 10)
4. Even without training, many of the Brazilian missionaries' instincts are good. This is especially true in the relational elements of mission such as developing friendships, hospitality, and identification. (163, 166)
5. The relationship focus of the personalistic elements in Brazilian culture breaks down in the hierarchical institutional environment of a missionary agency. This has negative consequences for missionary satisfaction and fulfillment, consensus in strategy development, ministry effectiveness, and missionary longevity. (184-186, 189)
6. Contrary to my opinion going into the interview process, it does not appear reasonable, in the current context, to think that seminary training alone might be sufficient preparation for service in crosscultural ministry. (149, 158, 160)
7. There is a pervasive concern within the Brazilian missiological community that too many candidates lack the spiritual depth needed to carry out a long-term commitment to crosscultural ministry on difficult fields. Consequently, training centers cannot presume spiritual maturity on the part of all students; the consensus among Brazilian mission leadership is that character building and spiritual formation must be foundational for effective training programs in the Brazilian context. This means—going again against the



grain of Brazilian *immediatismo*—that the amount of time needed for training must take more into account than simply what is needed to transmit a body of information. If leading trainers are correct in their belief that a primary need in missionary preparation is spiritual formation, then candidates, churches and mission agencies need to give the training centers time to do the job, and listen to the trainers' recommendations on the readiness of candidates to go to the field. (182-184).

8. A major deterrent for Brazilians seeking to open new fields is lack of information about and lack of connections inside those fields. That being the case, it would be advantageous to explore possibilities for Brazilian involvement in international partnerships, and to make training for serving in international teams part of the agenda in missionary preparation. (187-188, 190)

9. Lacking command of English puts Brazilian missionaries at a double disadvantage—both within the international team, and in finding language helpers. Teaching Brazilian missionaries how to learn a language directly from the people, and utilizing the local language as the language of the international team, would help erase those disadvantages. (156, 166)

10. Even missionaries from historical Protestant traditions had experiences on the field which they interpreted in spiritual conflict categories, making this a worldview and theological issue demanding sound, balanced treatment in training. (169-172)

11. A number of Brazilian missionaries express resentment at what they consider a lack of pastoral care from their agency. This reflects not only unmet needs, but also an expectation that the agency accept responsibility for pastoral care needs. (174-177)

12. The advantages of Brazilians' ethnic diversity carries with it a danger of presumed cultural similarity, that is not justified on the basis of ethnicity. (178-179)
13. Brazilian individualism is expressed, not in withdrawal or isolation from the group, but in attempts to assert one's will within the group. This is both a character issue to be dealt with through life in community during training, and a cultural issue of which non-Brazilian members of an international team should be made aware. (190-194, Appendix 8)
14. The Brazilian experience as a country that has suffered at the hands of colonial and neo-colonial powers gives them a point of identification with the people in many countries around the world. However, the dynamics of nationalism and a sense of insecurity or inferiority can create destructive dynamics on international teams. This is another matter that can be addressed in training an international team together before departure for the field. (70-72, 190-194, Appendix 8)

### Outlining the Model

The culturally-based model for Brazilian missionary training proposed in this chapter contains six broad categories derived primarily from the literature regarding missionary formation, which was the focus of Chapter 2. Undoubtedly, additional factors contributing to the formation of these six categories include my background of experience in Brazil, including eight years of teaching missions in a seminary and in a training center for mission candidates, plus input received over the years from Brazilian colleagues in ministry. All of these contributing factors previously have been identified as foundational for developing the theoretical sensitivity necessary for this research. Significantly, then, the model is not exclusively Brazilian in its formation, and may be adapted to many

contexts. The model becomes authentically Brazilian as it is applied in the Brazilian context.

Behind each category is a question. Whether these questions are implicit, or articulated explicitly, every candidate should be able to respond insightfully to each one by the end of training. A study of the issues and dynamics of Brazilian culture (Chapter 3), together with input from Brazilian missionaries, agency executives, and missions educators concerning the experiences of missionaries in training and on the field during the interview process (Chapter 4), provide the material that will help trainers (and Brazilian mission candidates) to shape the process by which it is possible to arrive at the place where a candidate can give satisfactory responses to these questions. These categories and the questions behind them are explained in the table below.

**Culturally-Based Model for Brazilian Missionary Training**  
**Table 12**

Category	Question	Refers to
Native Cultural Awareness	Do you know where you come from?	Appreciating the candidate's native cultural context
Crosscultural Capacity	Do you know where you are going?	Appreciating the differences between one's own culture and the anticipated host culture
Theological and Missiological Foundation	Do you know what you believe?	Developing a solid theological and missiological foundation
Emotional and Spiritual Maturity	Do you know who (and Whose) you are?	Developing the inner life
Relational Capacity	Do you know how to relate?	Readiness to work in cooperation with a mission team and national Christians
Task Readiness	Do you know your spiritual gifts and what you can do?	Identifying and developing one's gifts through experience in ministry



The reader will note that these six questions, which form the backdrop for the six categories representing an agenda for missionary training, are framed as questions that a trainer might put to the candidate. However, this presupposes that the trainer has thought through these issues on a conscious level, *with the Brazilian context in mind*. To be sure, most of these six questions could be answered in some sort of generic, acultural way. That would miss the point entirely. Contextualization occurs, not in asking this series of questions, but in responding to them with the perspective gained in looking for answers through a particular set of cultural lenses. That is precisely the step that has been lacking in Brazil.

### Developing the Data

The first step in developing the data was to identify ideas and themes from Chapter 3 that are relevant to the issue of missionary training, having used principles gained from the literature research on missionary training (Chapter 2) as a filter for exploring Brazilian culture. The second step was to repeat the process, identifying ideas and themes in Chapter 4 as introduced by the missionaries themselves and other leaders in the Brazilian mission movement. At the same time, interview data was being used to confirm the relevance of the cultural themes being explored. Thirdly, ideas and themes were arranged according to the six broad categories for a culturally-based agenda for Brazilian missionary training. These are the six categories identified in Table 13 above. This process sets the stage for the last step, which is discussing how these ideas and themes are relevant in the Brazilian context. That is the task to which we turn now.

### Applying the Model in the Brazilian Context

As stated above, the six questions which constitute this model may be relevant in a number of different settings. The focus here is on the fact that these categories help make sense of the research and interview data on Brazil. With this in mind, it is now possible to consider how this model can help formulate and organize insights that can inform missionary training in the Brazilian context.

#### Native Culture Awareness

Chapter 3 noted Leonardo Boff's observation that Brazil never passed through a period of rationalism and antimysticism, which typified the modern, scientific Western worldview, except as an echo of what was going on elsewhere. Boff's observation is significant for Christian mission in the Brazilian context. Popular Catholicism, Spiritism, and Afro-Brazilian religions maintained within the Brazilian worldview a pre-modern spirit of mystery and a sense of the divine that resisted the encroachment of the secularizing influences of modernism.

That pre-modern worldview is alive and well among unreached animists and followers of folk versions of the major world religions. These are the segments of the unreached peoples of the world most open to the Christian gospel, and provide Brazilian missionaries a point of contact with these cultures on a worldview level that eludes most Western missionaries. Furthermore, to the extent that a postmodern worldview represents a return to the mystical and spiritual dimensions of life that were for a long time de-emphasized or even ridiculed in the West, Brazilian missionaries and missiologists represent a resource for those churches that take seriously the need to re-evangelize the West. Those who train Brazilian missionaries must bring these worldview issues out of the

subconscious and into the light of day, helping Brazilians see points of connection between their worldview and those to whom they are sent. On another level of conversation, outside the strict focus of this research, it should be noted that Brazilian missiologists may have something to contribute out of their cultural experience to the Western churches engaged in mission to postmodern people with a mystical, spiritual bent.

One of the most significant elements for Christian mission found in Brazilian culture is the belief in and worship of many spirits and beings which are not of this world. This trait permeates Brazilian culture. The “enlightened” position to take in Brazilian society is to affirm the cultural contributions made by this patchwork quilt of religious practices and beliefs, and to adopt a stance of non-exclusive pluralism in relation to all faiths. For their part, Brazilian Protestants, who have been influenced heavily by the modern Western scientific worldview, may not take belief in and worship of these entities any more seriously than to consider it ignorant superstition. Many Brazilian Christians, however, including members of historical Protestant denominations as well as of the Pentecostal churches, will take the reality they see behind these practices very seriously indeed.

The pervasive presence of spiritist activities raises worldview issues that mission candidates ignore at their peril. They need to know that there exists a spiritual realm in opposition to the gospel. Because of this, missionaries going to many places in the world, especially in pioneer fields where the gospel has not taken root and where there are entrenched systems resisting it, must be prepared for the possibility of spiritual conflict, or risk being blindsided by it on the field.



Trainers should recognize, moreover, that candidates come for training with very different personal histories. Some have come to faith in Christ out of backgrounds in which they had contact with, or overt involvement in, some form of spiritism. Several Brazilian mission trainers and leaders have raised concerns in informal conversations that some of these candidates may have unresolved spiritual and emotional traumas stemming from their involvement, or family members' involvement, with spiritual entities. Mission training centers need to be sensitive to the possibility of such needs, and have someone available to help candidates bring closure to any underlying traumas. Some candidates need time and the support found in Christian community during training to identify and work through these issues before taking them to the field.

In terms of worldview, these first- and second-generation Christians usually have little hesitancy in continuing to affirm the reality of spiritual beings beyond the physical senses of this world. This would tend to make them somewhat more prepared for some of the spiritual realities that can be anticipated on pioneer fields, where entrenched non-Christian religious systems sometimes exacerbate the potential for spiritual conflict.

Other mission candidates have grown up in historical denominations, coming from families that have been traditional evangelicals for several generations. Their perspectives on issues of possession, healing, and spiritual conflict may be vastly different from those who come to Christ out of spiritism, or who come from a more Pentecostal background. For some, their worldview on these issues may be expected to be somewhat similar to those of fellow Christians from historical Protestant churches in the West, where these questions are not taken as seriously.

There is, therefore, a need to communicate to mission candidates a solidly biblical perspective concerning the existence of spiritual entities beyond this world, and the corresponding issue of spiritual conflict. This training needs to avoid the opposite extremes of sensationalism and obliviousness. By combining a biblically grounded and balanced theological base together with psychological and anthropological insights into their own culture, trainers can help candidates develop a sound theoretical and practical understanding both of their own culture, and of how to deal with similar realities on future fields of service.

Pentecostal Christians reflect more closely the Brazilian worldview than historical Protestants concerning the question of faith healing. In comparison with Christians from the West, in Brazil the language and practice of seeking faith healing is present among people even in denominations that do not historically practice it. Across the evangelical spectrum, there is a need for mission candidates to examine their own beliefs, practices, and worldview concerning healing. Some from the most extreme charismatic groups sensationalize spiritual healing; some from the historic Protestant traditions, which have been more influenced by the worldview of the Western Enlightenment, ignore or trivialize it. Because of their own cultural background, Brazilian missionaries, for the most part, would seem to have an instinctive advantage over their Western counterparts in understanding worldview issues concerning healing that are common among many of the unreached people groups of the world. Even so, it is important that trainers help mission candidates recognize the cultural roots of their own worldview concerning healing, examine their beliefs and practices in light of Scripture, and begin to anticipate how they themselves will respond to issues they may encounter within their anticipated host cultures.

It was noted also in Chapter 3 that Brazilian culture is marked by syncretism and pluralism. In considering all that is involved in training Brazilians for crosscultural missions, what are we to make of this syncretistic ethos that permeates the culture to the point that it can be described as a “duplicity of the soul?” Certainly, the open-mindedness and the acceptance of others that flow from this way of seeking truth “in the middle” and relating things to one another are admirable qualities. This open, accepting attitude can translate into Brazilian missionaries having a real knack for developing genuine friendships with people who are different. This is an authentic strength that should be valued, nurtured and encouraged.

The problematic side of this basically positive trait would come into play if a natural, open-hearted acceptance of individuals were extended to include either an active affirmation or a passive acceptance of beliefs or practices at odds with biblical faith. While this problem is more prevalent among newer Christians lacking a strong doctrinal base than it would be among mission candidates, the cultural trait is strong enough that missionary trainers need to be attentive, especially when dealing with mission candidates coming from backgrounds in spiritism or folk Catholicism, where syncretism is most prevalent. Even while, on a conscious level, most evangelical Brazilian mission candidates would never espouse syncretistic views, trainers must recognize that pervasive cultural attitudes can exert an unperceived influence on one’s worldview. With that in mind, they need to make sure that individual candidates for crosscultural mission have a biblical understanding of the uniqueness of Christ. Given the syncretism that pervades Brazilian culture, this biblical truth represents a central distinctive of authentic Christian faith in the Brazilian context.



At the same time, trainers need to be aware of another, opposite reaction of some Brazilian evangelicals to the predominating, accepting pluralism of their culture, which on biblical grounds they cannot espouse. There is a tendency instead, at least in some circles, to denigrate and caricaturize these other groups from a distance. This is done, for instance, in the common reference to Catholics as “idolaters.” If Brazilian missionaries are to be able to engage respectfully and effectively with those of other faiths on their fields of service, we need to help them during training to develop an adequate theology of religions, and to help them learn how to engage Brazilians of other faiths before they leave for the field.

In missionary training, trainers need to help candidates make sure that they know the difference, on the one hand, between being open to glimpses of truth encountered in others and accepting people who think differently than we do as Christians who are under the authority of Scripture, and on the other accepting their ideas even when those ideas run contrary to Scripture. Candidates also need to distinguish, in light of the vivid experiences that many Brazilians have with spiritual entities not of this world, that these entities can be “real” without being “true,” because they do not lead us to faith, obedience, and trust in God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

Another cultural trait mentioned in Chapter 3 was *immediatismo*, the tendency to plan and act on the basis of short-term desires and benefits, rather than taking a longer view. As seen in Chapter 4, this short-term approach hinders missions by putting a great deal of pressure on missionaries to produce immediate, numerical results. There is little understanding in the churches, and sometimes in the mission agencies, of how much more difficult it is to bear fruit breaking new ground among unreached peoples than it is in

Brazil, one of the most responsive fields to the gospel in the world. This pressure to produce results will impact the methods used by Brazilian missionaries on the field, who often will perceive that they do not have the time needed to invest in a relational, incarnational approach to witness.

The Brazilian cultural characteristic of *immediatismo* presents, as discussed in Chapter 4, a series of challenges to the Brazilian missions effort. These challenges include a tendency to rush candidates to the field before they are fully prepared, and an expectation of quick results that may characterize either agency leaders, supporting churches, or the missionaries themselves. One way to hold in check the negative tendencies of *immediatismo* is through instilling a thoroughly biblical understanding of holistic, incarnational mission. Brazilian candidates need to be grounded in biblical patterns for doing mission, calling particular attention to the example of Jesus, who became one with the people in the Incarnation, who prepared during thirty years for a ministry of three years, and who engaged in a ministry that met the broad range of human need. But it is not enough to teach these truths as biblical doctrines. They must be internalized on a value level to the point that, as missionaries on the field, it will be possible to resist the cultural impulse, both from within themselves and in the form of external pressure, to take short cuts that undermine effective, long-term service.

But the problem of *immediatismo* does not begin only after Brazilian missionaries arrive on the field. Perhaps even more to the point for our subject, Brazilian *immediatismo* often tempts churches, agency leaders, and mission candidates to shortchange the process needed for effective pre-field training, too often bypassing this stage altogether. The attitude of some seminary graduates who have not been to the field, and who believe that

their seminary training is all they need for effective crosscultural service, plays right into this mindset. One of the challenges for trainers in the Brazilian mission movement, then, is to convince our constituency—candidates, agency leaders, and local churches—that pre-field training represents a good investment of time and money over the long haul. But if trainers are to make that case, they have to be able to offer a course of training that meets both the actual and perceived needs of the candidates, and helps them to be better adjusted personally and more productive in their ministries over that long haul. Those who have been entrusted with the training of Brazilian missionaries must demonstrate a sustained commitment to excellence.

One of the major features of Brazilian culture is *jeito*. The improvisational aspect of *jeito*, at which Brazilians excel, combines with the short-term focus of *imediatismo* in a way that can serve as a powerful deterrent against effective, long-range planning. By no means should Brazilian missionaries and mission organizations model themselves after those North American missions that, in turn, follow the long-range planning styles of large, international corporations. However, there is truth in the old adage that says something to the effect that, if you aim at nothing, nothing is what you will achieve. A sense of direction and an idea of what one hopes to achieve can bring a sense of order out of chaos, give missionaries a renewed sense of purpose and satisfaction, bring a sense of realism into the process of setting expectations (which will, in turn, diminish some of the unrealistic expectations inherent in *imediatismo*), and make possible a sensible system of mutual accountability. To be sure, many Brazilian mission agencies and missionaries are excellent planners. But trainers must recognize the cultural factors that mitigate against effective



planning, and during training help students learn how to set and meet reasonable goals within a supportive community that exercises mutual accountability.

As Chapter 3 makes clear, using *jeito* involves walking an ethical tightrope. How is it possible, then, to talk to Brazilian mission candidates about *jeito* in a way that will encourage distinctively ethical behavior, while at the same time avoiding the danger of inhibiting the natural creativity of Brazilian missionaries? The exploration of *jeito* in Chapter 3, based primarily on the previously cited work of Livia Barbosa and of Lourenço Stélio Rega, makes clear that the ethical key in *jeito* is to avoid using it for unfair personal advantage, particularly in a material or financial sense. A stress on personal integrity and transparency as an integral part of our witness to Christ is foundational. In addition, it would be helpful to have guided discussions about *jeito*, with students themselves evaluating its positives and negatives, and discussing when it is ethical within the Brazilian context and when it is not. That discussion is unlikely to produce unanimity. We can then point out that, if it is difficult to define the ethical line within Brazilian culture where the candidate basically knows the rules, it would be very easy to cross that line unknowingly in another culture. Such activities in the classroom in Brazil may at least give students pause, and a series of reference points, when they are thinking about using their Brazilian *jeito* on the mission field.

It is helpful to remember that one theory about how *jeito* became such a foundational characteristic of Brazilian culture is that it was an instrument used to subvert unjust laws written by rulers who had no intention of abiding by those laws themselves. Later in this chapter, different dynamics in the relationship between Brazilian missionaries and their agency leaders will be explored. At this point, the reader might remember that

*jeito* can be a factor in these dynamics. If a Brazilian missionary feels that rules or instructions emanating from headquarters are unpleasant or unfair, the cultural tendency will be to use *jeito* to get around those rules or instructions. This tendency will be exacerbated greatly if the agency leaders making the rules or issuing the instructions do not have field experience themselves, which at the present time is not uncommon in Brazil. In some of these situations, field missionaries may feel that they have every right to disobey their leaders, subvert the rules using *jeito*, and trust their own creative instincts.

In Chapter 4 I mentioned the example of a billboard inside the huge steel factory and port complex that told workers not to improvise, but to follow standard procedures. In training Brazilian missionaries, it would be a mistake to tell them never to improvise. Most of them could not help from doing it to one degree or other, even if they wanted to. However, it is vitally important to train candidates in “standard procedures”—that is, in good missiological anthropology, in good evangelism and discipleship strategies, and, above all, in solid biblical theology. If candidates have a solid foundation in good missiological theory, then when they do use their creativity, resorting to that Brazilian *jeito*, it is more likely that it will be informed by and within the parameters of good missiology. The goal of contextualized training in Brazil is not to take the Brazilian out of Brazilian missionaries, but to help them channel their qualities and characteristics to further the gospel.

Chapter 3 also highlighted the difference in Brazilian culture between the public and the private, and the fact that different sets of rules exist for behavior in the different domains of house, street, and the other world. There are important ethical implications in this cultural reality for missionary training. If different behavior is permitted, even

expected, in different domains, then the natural tendency will be to limit the authority of biblical teaching and the practice of Christian ethics in areas outside the domain of the “other world.” Moreover, Brazilian Christians are liable to remain unaware of this ethical dichotomy, or to see it as normal and acceptable, because of its deep roots as a worldview issue. Of course, it is to be anticipated that non-Christians in the host countries of future missionaries will see differing standards of behavior in different social domains as simply hypocritical and unethical, perceptions which can totally destroy the witness of Brazilian missionaries who have not developed the Christian maturity necessary to let the lordship of Christ extend dynamically and thoroughly into every area of life.

A priority issue for Brazilian Christians in general, and missionary candidates in particular, is to be able to identify which ethical system is predominant in a given situation. In training, instructors need to approach ethics in such a way that mission candidates learn how to “read” their own culture more effectively on a conscious level. It is necessary to bring values and worldview issues like this out of the subconscious level so they may be examined in the light of day on the basis of Scripture. This is not to suggest that Brazilian Christians should reject all cultural norms and values identified with the domains of the home, the street, and the other world in favor of a more singular “Christian” approach. On the contrary, it is impossible to understand and apply Scripture in a cultural vacuum. What is urgently needed, however, is a recognition that these different frames of reference exist, along with a simultaneous commitment to examine the values and associated behaviors in each cultural domain in light of Scripture, and a conscious submission to an overarching ethic that is at one and the same time Brazilian in essence and Christian to the core. That is the only way to avoid ethical schizophrenia and the kind of moral justifications that launch



us unwittingly on the road to hypocrisy. While this issue requires urgent attention on the part of the Brazilian church, the need is especially acute in the training of leaders such as crosscultural witnesses.

This illustrates the need to include in anthropological training, not only an examination of theory and a study of the “strange” ways of other cultures, but time for stimulated, guided reflection on different aspects of the missionary’s own cultural baggage. In other words, before considering issues of crosscultural ethics, missionary candidates need to engage in a period of critical evaluation of how their own culture has affected them.

In a generic sense, this observation would be true for any mission candidate; there is nothing particularly “Brazilian” about it. However, owing to the fact that Brazilians have a still-developing sense of national identity, and there exists no consensus about just what it means to be Brazilian, Brazilian mission candidates have a special need to examine their own culture and identity.

The process of cultural self-awareness, if begun before ever leaving Brazil, may save many missionaries from making major mistakes on the field out of sheer ignorance. This reflection process should be conducted in a cross-disciplinary fashion, including not only anthropological insights, but input from the areas of biblical studies and Christian ethics as well.

### Crosscultural Capacity

The potential advantage to the wide ethnic diversity in Brazil goes beyond missionaries’ capacity to blend in physically with other peoples. The fact is that, due to miscegenation, all Brazilians have experience dealing with people who look different. On

the surface, it appears that this reality gives the Brazilian mission candidate an innate familiarity with how to relate to people who are different, and a corresponding freedom from ethnic prejudice. In fact, Brazilians say that this lack of prejudice is one of the positive characteristics Brazilians have to offer as they respond to God's call to world mission.

However, Renato Ortiz observes that the ideology of racial democracy obscures the real issues of race relations in Brazil (1994:36). While there are many Brazilian missionaries and mission candidates who fit the profile described above, and who not only have experience with different racial groups but are also free of prejudice, that is not something that can be taken for granted in the case of all missionaries or mission candidates. Despite the myth of a racial democracy, prejudice and discrimination do exist in Brazil, even though they take different forms than they do in the United States. For example, an African-American friend, a professional who spent a couple of years in Brazil, has a high degree of perceptivity in picking up on hidden prejudice. He told me that it was rampant in Brazil. Indeed, racist remarks from light-skinned Brazilian evangelicals, while not considered acceptable in public, can be all too common in private. The reality is: in Brazil, skin color affects social and economic class. In general, the darker you are, the poorer you are. There are exceptions, of course, and Afro-Brazilians who become economically successful can find a social space corresponding to their financial status. But this only proves the common adage, "money whitens."

The most telling input in my personal experience, however, has come on the occasions when Afro-Brazilian brothers and sisters have opened up to share the prejudice they have encountered within the church and how they feel relegated to an inferior status

by many fellow Christians. It seems, then, that mission leaders cannot take for granted in missionary training that Brazilian mission candidates are all free from racism and are ready to exemplify to the world the ideal of Brazilian racial democracy, much less the biblical reality that all Christians have been made one in Christ Jesus. But precisely because of the uncritical acceptance of the truism that Brazil does not have a problem with racial prejudice, the subtle prejudices that do exist may be suppressed, with candidates unaware that they harbor these attitudes.

What this means is that missionary training programs in Brazil must not fall for the national myth of racial democracy to the point of being blind to real problems of racial prejudice that exist in the churches and therefore, presumably, in some missionaries and mission candidates. Frank and open explorations of the issue of race in Brazil are necessary, with trainers drawing attention to the need for examining personal attitudes and actions.

As statements from Appendices 12, 13 and 14 on Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission indicate, there are Brazilian missionaries, agency executives, and missionary trainers who are convinced that miscegenation assists them in identifying with peoples around the world. However, it should be stressed that this is true only on the superficial level of physical appearance. That is not inconsequential in many parts of the world. However, this potential advantage can quickly turn into a disadvantage if Brazilian missionaries assume too much. They must learn that physical similarities do not imply cultural similarities.

This lesson can begin in the classroom with a good course in missiological anthropology. An introduction to the various elements of culture can raise the candidate's



level of awareness about just how varied and significant cultural differences can be.

During this process, it will be important for the instructor to help students unpack their own cultural baggage, becoming familiar with values, thought processes, behavior, and aspects of worldview that are uniquely theirs as Brazilians. At every point where these aspects of Brazilian culture do not conflict with Biblical truth, they should be valued and affirmed. If the instructor happens to not be a Brazilian, this process will not only be especially helpful to students in appreciating their own culture, but also will model for students the kind of respect they should show for their future host culture.

A deep appreciation for the profound cultural differences that can serve as barriers even for people with similar physical appearances, however, must be experienced in order to be internalized completely. Accordingly, students need crosscultural experiences outside the classroom. As the reader is by now aware, one does not have to travel far in Brazil to encounter profound cultural differences. Traveling on mission projects to another region of Brazil is one option. Engaging in ministry with people of a different social class is possible within easy walking distance of where one lives in any major city in Brazil. Ideally, an experience in another country can be part of a candidate's preparation before leaving for a full-time mission assignment. Processing these experiences with students can help them appreciate further the significance of cultural differences, even among people with similar physical appearances.

Interview responses also indicate that the greatest presumptions of cultural similarities based on physical appearances may lie, not with the candidates, but with the trainers and with mission agency leaders. Like the myth of racial democracy, what could be called the myth of assumed cultural similarity based on physical appearances has

outlived its usefulness in the Brazilian context. Failure to recognize its dangers may hinder Brazilians' significant capacity for effective crosscultural mission service.

There are other areas of crosscultural capacity that must be explored. For example, in interviews Brazilian missionaries consistently mentioned culture shock, or issues of cultural adaptation, as a type of problem for which they were not adequately prepared. A particularly troubling aspect was brought to the fore by a missionary who pointed out that professors in Brazil could not help them prepare for culture shock because they had never experienced it themselves. Once again, we come face to face with the disconcerting reality that too many people are training (and supervising) missionaries in Brazil who have never been missionaries themselves. No amount of reading about culture shock can prepare one to teach about it if one has not lived through it. Every missionary training course needs to deal with the question of culture shock, and never, under any circumstances, should this part of the course be taught by anyone who has not served as a field missionary and successfully adapted to life in another culture. There may be a rationale for instructors with no field experience to teach some aspects of a course, but not this one. Failure to comply with this minimal standard is to forfeit all credibility for a course of training.

As noted in Chapter 4, the issue of language learning was one of the primary concerns of Brazilian missionaries. One reason that came out in the interviews was the fact that they often had to learn an intermediate language before they could learn the heart language of the people among whom they would be working. At times, this was because they were working on an international team, and they had to learn the language the team used as a *lingua franca* before learning the language of the people. This deepens the experience of culture shock in two ways. First, Brazilian missionaries usually have to

adapt to another culture that dominates an international team, putting them through two simultaneous experiences of culture shock. Secondly, the need to adapt to the culture of an international mission team, usually upon arriving on the field, inevitably delays or even thwarts the process of adaptation to the host culture.

Similarly, there were cases where no language helpers could be found who could use Portuguese as the intermediate, teaching language. Again, the Brazilian missionaries would find themselves learning another language, such as French or English, before beginning to learn the heart language of the people.

Beyond the issue of having to learn an intermediate language before moving on to the primary language, many Brazilian missionaries felt frustrated in not being able to communicate upon arrival on the field. Remembering that Brazil is a relational culture and how expressive Brazilians are, it is not surprising that Brazilian missionaries would be frustrated by not being able to communicate right away. They were saying that they wished they had learned a language before leaving Brazil, even if it was not the primary language in which they would be working on the field.

There are several issues to be explored here. First, according to David Eberhardt, a Bible translator for SIL, it is important always to learn a language from a native speaker (Eberhardt 2004:personal interview). In the case of many unreached people groups, it is not possible to find a native speaker who can or will help a Brazilian missionary in Brazil, before they leave for the field. It may, however, be possible to find a native speaker of one of the major languages spoken in the region, or the language that will be used in an international mission team. That would be one place to start, and it could be done as part of the training process. In fact, some Brazilian training courses offer this option.



There is a major drawback, however, to this approach. The process of cultural adaptation and integration is facilitated when newly arrived missionaries embrace the host culture and begin the process of learning the people's heart language without delay. The first days and weeks are a time when the missionary needs to be bonding to the host culture, and anything that diverts the missionary's attention from that task could result in permanent difficulties in adaptation (see Brewster and Brewster 1999:444-448). In the case of new international teams that are being formed with the intention of arriving on the field together, the team bonding needs to happen *before* the team leaves for the field, during a special training period in which they can get to know one another and something about each other's native culture. This can help reduce misunderstandings on the field, and enable the team to embrace the host culture and adapt to it together right from the start. Furthermore, once the international team begins learning the host language, that language needs to become the primary language of the team's work and fellowship. Instead of distracting from cultural adaptation, the team can thus enhance it.

The fact that there are many places where Brazilian missionaries go in which they can find no one able to help them learn the local language through Portuguese presents what many missionaries consider an extra burden, forcing them to learn another language such as English or French first. There is a way to turn what seems to be a burden into an advantage. Brazilian missionaries need training in how to learn a language directly from the people, without having to go through any other language. Learning how to do this, before they go to the field, will save them the step of having to learn another language once they arrive on the field, just to have a way to get to the language they really want to learn. In the process, bonding with the host culture will be enhanced.

Previously, the need was identified to help mission candidates learn how to live in a non-Christian environment that may be hostile to Christianity. One step would be to teach the basics of secure communication, in order to protect the missionary on the field. In at least two instances, Brazilian missionaries told me that it is the mission agency executives who are the most careless. Therefore, missionaries going to dangerous fields should not only receive this instruction themselves, but should be oriented to make sure their entire agency knows proper safety precautions and is committed to follow them. Even if the new missionary has to give the orientation to his or her leaders, it must be done.

Another angle to use in approaching this problem of not knowing how to live in a non-Christian environment would be to work with candidates through a four-step process. First, trainers can ask candidates how many non-Christians they know, and on what level of intimacy. If a candidate is not comfortable with people who are not Christians, and does not have any non-Christian friends, then it would probably be a good idea to send that person to an intermediate field, within or outside Brazil, before they go to a pioneer field. A second question would be to ask them about their attitudes toward non-Christians. Are they demonized as enemies of the faith, or are they seen as people of infinite worth who God loves and for whom Christ died? Third, some of the literature on how to relate to and reach secular people in the post-Christendom West may prove useful, even though it is written for a context that is significantly different from Brazil and very different from the pioneer fields to which some Brazilian missionaries are going. For example, I have adapted for the Brazilian context and used in class material from George Hunter III's books *How to Reach Secular People*, *Church for the Unchurched*, and *The Celtic Way of*

*Evangelism.* In doing so, I always have made it a point to ask for feedback from students to see if they feel my attempt to contextualize this material makes it relevant for them, and, without fail, they have responded to it with enthusiasm. Finally, it is imperative to teach students a biblical theology of suffering. Without such a biblical grounding, some will waiver in their commitment and perhaps return to Brazil when hardship comes.

Family issues are important in crosscultural readiness and adaptation. Gender role restrictions have been very difficult for some female Brazilian missionaries, both single and married, serving among Muslim populations. While they are in training, they need orientation on the specific cultural realities they will face on the field. Trainers need to make sure that these women have a firm conviction of calling before they face what can be some fairly harsh realities. For couples, open communication is vital. The Brazilian husband has nothing of the restrictions that his wife might face in a Muslim society, and he needs to be careful not to get so involved in “ministry” that he forgets to support his wife. Trainers need to be especially alert for signs of small issues in the relationship that could be magnified on the field.

Also, some missionaries confided during the interviews some serious difficulties that their children faced during the process of adaptation to the field. Missing friends and loved ones in Brazil, difficulties in adapting to a new school, or to home schooling, and other challenges call for parents to give their children the support they need. Three of the parents mentioned behavior and/or personality changes which were alarming to them at the time. Children need to be included in some training activities with their parents, and have activities during training that are geared specifically to them as well. In some places, public worship will not be available, making family home Bible study and worship even



more vital. These are habits that need to be encouraged and developed during training.

In short, the entire family needs to be included in the preparation process, because they are all going to go through the experiences on the field together.

Different responses to interview questions indicated that training needs to include orientation to the crosscultural dynamic in doing theology. Comments made during the interviews illustrate the fact that some missionaries are clinging to the theologies that they took with them to the field, while others are learning to read and interpret the Bible in the light of their new cultural contexts.

In working with students coming from the historical Protestant denominations, teaching contextual theology is difficult, probably because so little of it has been done by Brazilian evangelicals. The history has been to accept theologies from Europe and North America pretty much intact. That began to change somewhat as progressive evangelicals began to process and interact with the perspectives of liberation theology, but large segments of the church went untouched. The point is, trainers need to teach students how to do contextual theology in Brazil if, as missionaries, they are ever to encourage young churches to do the same in their own context. At the minimum, students need to see their teachers reading and interpreting Scripture from a Brazilian perspective, constantly asking themselves and their students what the text says to the Brazilian context, and taking Brazilian issues and questions to the biblical text in search of guidance and direction. Trainers also need to model for their students a spirit of openness, and an attitude of expectation that God will open new truths to us as we study the Bible. Students should be able to catch from their trainers the spirit of adventure in learning and growing together. Furthermore, if students see their professors ready to learn from them, even in their role as

teachers, this will speak volumes to students about how to interact with people in the churches on their fields of service. This openness to learn with and from the people will be a basic starting point in building within students the capacity to do theology in context.

In thinking about preparing Brazilian missionaries for the crosscultural experience, trainers must take into account the reality of *saudade*. A Brazilian living outside of Brazil is going to experience feelings of loss, nostalgia, grief and longing with an emotional intensity that may be difficult for people of other nationalities to fully comprehend. Combining an awareness of *saudade* together with what we know about the importance of relationships with family and friends for Brazilians, it should be clear that the nature of Brazilian culture will make it more difficult, in important ways, for Brazilian missionaries to overcome the natural feelings of nostalgia that new missionaries from any nationality can be expected to experience. Moreover, feelings of *saudade* can be even more intense for Brazilian missionaries working in the physical or spiritual isolation entailed in pioneer fields.

One task in missionary training is to prepare candidates for the emotional and spiritual challenge that awaits them when the intense experience of *saudade* sets in on the field. Furthermore, trainers need to work with agencies and churches in order to help them facilitate the process of adaptation and integration on the missionaries' new fields of service, especially since at the point of *saudade* we are dealing with a challenge that is unique to the experience of Brazilian missionaries, at least in terms of intensity. Failure to address this need would be a disservice to Brazilian missionaries and will undermine the contributions they are capable of making to the cause of the kingdom around the world.

One way to help alleviate the solitude of *saudade* on the field is through close fellowship with colleagues on the mission team. We can simulate these experiences in training through small group experiences of worship, Bible study, classroom assignments, ministry projects, and sharing tasks in everyday living. Trainers should be attentive to candidates' emotional stability and maturity. It will also be important to make sure that candidates have the spiritual resources to deal with solitude through a rich and varied devotional life. Families can be prepared to face the challenges of solitude through solidarity with one another. In healthy families, challenges faced on the field together can be a great bonding experience. For singles, it will be important to make sure that they are capable of creating substitute family from among the mission team and nationals. Trainers must remember that for relational, outgoing people like Brazilians, solitude is a particularly difficult challenge to overcome.

#### Theological and Missiological Foundation

It has been demonstrated that in the Brazilian population in general, although not necessarily among the evangelical mission force in particular, Brazilian religiosity tends to be very broad, but not very deep. But what is the pertinence of that discussion for the subject of missionary training? The hard question, it seems, is "Are Brazilian evangelicals significantly different from their compatriots in promoting a religious faith with the vision and dynamic power to effect transformation of the social order?" Obviously, evangelical soteriology emphasizes the personal element of faith in calling people to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Does evangelical theology and practice demonstrate any capacity or inclination to go beyond the personal dynamic and challenge the societal structures that perpetuate the misery in which so many Brazilians live?



In Brazil, religion popularly is sought in order to make one feel good. In a country that experiences so much personal misery and social injustice, this is understandable and valid, to a point. Jesus did say, “Come to me, all who are weary and whose load is heavy: I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28, NRSV). Too often, though, this personal dimension of salvation receives exclusive attention, making a difference in the lives of individuals but doing little on the level of societal transformation. If ever there was a superficially religious context that cries out for a deep understanding of and commitment to a holistic gospel, it would be contemporary Brazil.

This discussion is extremely relevant for Brazilian missionary training, because it matters profoundly what kind of gospel it is that missions candidates take with them to their fields of service. Brazil is a country with a history of religiosity that is long on personal experiences designed to meet the needs of the individual, but short on the kind of commitment that sets the gospel of the kingdom free to correct injustice and to transform society. Moreover, many of the peoples with whom Brazilian missionaries are sharing the gospel suffer from high indices of poverty. The gospel that Brazilian missionaries present to them needs to be relevant both eternally, and in the issues they face in the here and now. Significantly, the leading missiological theologians and missionary trainers among Brazilian evangelicals are committed to a holistic theology and practice of mission. But this would not necessarily be true of all mission agency leaders, and this understanding certainly has not penetrated into many of the churches from which mission volunteers come for training.

From my own experience in the Brazilian classroom, I know that many students come to see the Bible in a whole new light when they encounter the perspective of holistic

mission based on a theology that takes seriously the teaching and practice of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God. They may find this approach threatening at first, because it is so different from what they learned in their churches. But good mission practice starts with good mission theory, and a solid biblical mission theology is foundational for good theory. Most Brazilian mission candidates are open to the idea of holistic mission when they see its biblical basis, and they understand instinctively its relevance for their own cultural context. But as has been seen, a concept of Christian mission that includes societal as well as individual transformation goes against the grain of five hundred years of Brazilian history and some deeply imbedded worldview issues, as well as the teaching and practice of many evangelical churches. It therefore becomes imperative to work with mission candidates in developing a holistic theology of mission that is both biblical and practical. In addition, the process of helping candidates develop a theology of mission that is obviously relevant to their own cultural context will provide them with a model of how to do theology in their new context—especially if trainers draw attention to it.

It will not be enough, however, to simply talk about a holistic theology of mission. The training process must include practical experience in holistic mission in the curriculum. These can be among the most formational experiences that students have. One example stands out in my mind. My wife was teaching a course on urban missions, and as part of the course required candidates to accompany her on a mission project our church was doing in a *favela*, an urban shantytown, on the periphery of Rio de Janeiro where we had an ongoing ministry of church planting, community development, and human needs ministry. One of the students came to my wife beforehand, confessing that she had never been in a *favela*, but had heard so much about them that she was very

frightened to go. She went anyway, and during a leprosy awareness campaign lecture for the adults of the community, she opened up space in the overcrowded sanctuary by taking the children out back. There, she put down wooden planks across the mud so the approximately one hundred children could sit down, and kept them enthralled with Bible stories and songs while the adult meeting was going on inside. Something clicked inside her. She sought other opportunities to do urban ministry with the poor, and today feels confirmed in a sense of call to work with the urban poor. This life-changing event happened because a teacher took her out of her comfort zone in the classroom, and into a hurting community. God did the rest.

One doctrine that deserves special attention, in light of the Brazilian cultural tendency to “*juntar*,” is the Uniqueness of Christ. There is a strong predisposition in Brazilian culture in general not only to accept the subjective validity of various religious traditions for the adherents of that tradition, but also for individuals to participate actively in a number of religious traditions with conflicting worldviews and concepts of truth. Brazilian crosscultural witnesses need to utilize their native cultural instincts at the point of accepting people of other faiths and identifying with them on the human level, while at the same time going against the natural flow of their native culture in affirming the uniqueness of Jesus and the importance of offering people the chance to find new life in him.

Given the strong cultural affinity for syncretism, an important issue in Brazilian missionary training is that candidates must have a solid biblical and theological foundation before going to another culture. Without such a foundation, Brazilian missionaries may not know how to respond to the challenges to their Christian faith that are inevitable when living among people of other faiths, and therefore be prone culturally to possibly



compromise Christian truth. This is especially true for candidates preparing for service among people who have never heard the Christian gospel, and where the social and intellectual challenges to it may be stronger. It is also especially true for candidates who are relatively new first-generation Christians.

As reported in Chapter 4, twenty-one out of the twenty-six candidates for missions had already done a course in theology or religious education at a seminary. The assumption often is made, both by the graduates and mission agencies, that they therefore have a strong doctrinal foundation. This cannot be taken for granted, however, because academic work in theology is inadequate if it is divorced from the reality of one's inner life, and from one's practice in life and ministry.

It must also be kept in mind that a Scriptural grounding which is adequate for ministry within one's own evangelical or denominational subculture is not necessarily adequate for ministry, leadership and effective witness in a completely different culture. Most seminaries, for example, do little or nothing to help students see that the way we understand and interpret the text of Scripture is influenced immeasurably by our cultural context, and the culturally-colored lenses we use (the only ones we *can* use) to interpret Scripture. A missionary who fails to understand this is, at best, working in the dark. At the worst, this missionary is destined to attempt imposing an irrelevant, foreign theology on the national church. It is therefore necessary, even for seminary graduates, to learn to recognize the cultural lenses through which they read the Bible. If they can learn to do this during missionary training, then they will be equipped to one day look at the Bible through the new lenses of their host culture. Getting some candidates to see this need can be a

daunting challenge, and may reveal some character or spiritual maturity issues that need to be addressed as well.

There is also a need to provide adequate training for the increasing number of professionals who are going overseas and using their secular professions as a platform for missions. While in many respects this is a very positive trend, trainers must not let these candidates make the mistake of assuming, as some do, that years of experience in the church assures that they have the biblical background they will need as crosscultural witnesses. Solid introductory academic studies of the Bible and sensitive, Spirit-led application of biblical truth to their lives in personal and group devotional disciplines—together with a sensitivity toward the relevance of this truth for crosscultural ministry—is a non-negotiable necessary foundation for all crosscultural witnesses, including those who will use their secular profession as a platform for ministry. Trainers also need to provide introductory studies in culture, theology of religions, and strategy development for these Christian professionals.

There is one pool of potential crosscultural witnesses that might be an exception to the otherwise normative insistence that all mission candidates have at least a good foundation in academic studies of the Bible. The numerical strength of Brazilian evangelicalism is among the poorer working class. Many of these Christians, while never having had the opportunity to go far enough with their studies to tackle an in-depth academic study of Scripture, nevertheless carry within them a simple but deeply profound faith that would make them extremely effective witnesses in many situations around the world. Mission leaders do not need to be so tied to an academic approach that they eliminate multitudes of potentially effective missionaries, or to train them to a point that

they will no longer be able to communicate simply and honestly with those most likely to receive their witness.

### Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

During my interviews with Brazilian missionaries, there were none who projected evidence of emotional and spiritual immaturity or instability. All of them spoke of situations that had stretched and tested them; six missionaries told stories of having endured remarkable situations of severe stress and grave physical danger. People who are not emotionally and spiritually mature will not survive and thrive on difficult, isolated fields. That means that trainers have a significant responsibility in helping candidates identify and deal with issues that could present problems if they remain unresolved before they go to the field.

The first stage in dealing with these issues is when candidates apply for admission to a training program. There needs to be a process of psychological testing and screening done by professional counselors. This step must be treated with utmost seriousness. In our first two years of operation at the *Centro Integrado de Educação e Missões*, for example, three people were admitted who were not qualified. One had problems that surfaced immediately, but two stayed long enough to create internal problems for both trainers and their fellow students. These experiences have shown that trainers are doing neither applicants or the program any favor by letting people into the community who are not ready for a rigorous training experience.

Even when proper caution is exercised in the application process, the experiences of life in community offer opportunities for trainers to observe candidates in a variety of situations, and for everyone to get to know each other on an intimate basis, “warts and all.”



It is here, in community, that problems surface and where accountability, growth, and affirmation can occur. Therefore, “community” cannot be a superficial word applied to a group of people who have gathered for a strictly academic course of study; community is the very essence and ethos of who we are and what we are about in training men and women for Christian mission. Both large- and small-group experiences need to be built into the rhythm and flow of community life in a way that encompasses work, worship, study, and fellowship.

As a result of life in community, trainers can expect that problems and tensions will arise of both an individual and group nature. Some of these can be dealt with through mentoring relationships that should be established between trainers and candidates. In addition, one or more members of the group of trainers should be specialists in pastoral care. Access to outside professional counseling when the occasional need arises will be necessary as well.

The problems and tensions that arise through life in community should not be seen as peripheral incidents to be avoided as much as possible. To the contrary, trainers will need to induce stress from time to time, simulating to some extent this aspect of the reality of life on the mission field. This induced stress can be expected to provoke some dynamic tension. Trainers need to see how candidates handle this stress in order to help them get ready for field reality.

Chapter 3 noted Luis Wesley de Sousa’s observation that evangelical faith is very emotional in Brazil. That being the case, it is to be expected that a number of those registering commitments for mission service are doing so as they are caught up in the emotion of worship services and conferences focusing on missions. There is an inherent

danger here for the Brazilian mission movement. Emotions are a valid part of religious experience, but emotions will not sustain a mission movement that contains a strong focus on unreached peoples. There must be a corresponding, long-term commitment to mission in the face of hardships and slow results that are an inherent part of mission among the unreached. While the wider church needs to be made aware of this issue, it is vitally important for trainers to address it with candidates, making sure that students are sufficiently aware of the realities that they will face on the field, and ascertaining that they exhibit a sufficiently deep volitional commitment to sustain them over the long term. Failure to do so is an injustice to candidates and to the churches that support them. Everyone involved must remember that the goal never can be simply to get missionaries to the field, no matter how great the need. The goal is to send missionaries who are prepared and equipped for the task to which they are called. There should be no shortcuts here—even though trainers can expect occasions where churches, sending agencies, and candidates desire shortcuts. This is not a place for *immediatismo*, but for steady, committed, responsible action.

Chapter 3 points out that Brazilian Catholicism and various forms of spiritism are rich in rites and symbols. At the same time, Brazilian evangelicals are comparatively poor in appropriate ritual and symbols. In fact, in an effort to avoid appearing similar in any way to these other religious systems, many Brazilian evangelicals have made a conscious and deliberate effort to minimize their own use of ritual and symbols. Nevertheless, they are still Brazilians. They have many of the same physical and emotional needs as their neighbors, and the same cultural openness to the supernatural. Once they arrive on the field, it can be anticipated that Brazilian missionaries will benefit from some supporting

system of symbols and rituals to help them sustain their spiritual well-being in relative isolation. It will also help missionaries to recognize the importance of symbols and rituals in reaching and discipling those to whom they are sent.

With this in mind, training needs to give attention to two areas in which ritual and symbolism can be developed prior to field departure and which are not dependent on the presence of an extensive Christian support community. This can be done in the context of the missionary's personal devotional life, and also in the context of the small Christian community that is a mission team. The ritual and symbolism does not have to be complicated, nor does it have to offend the sensibilities of missionaries from traditions that have strong objections to the use of traditional Christian symbols, such as the cross. Simple things, such as maintaining a certain symbolic body posture during personal prayer, might prove to be a helpful ritual to some. The practice of a spiritual discipline such as fasting may also be a new element for some mission candidates that could enrich their experience and help them to sense God's presence. In small group gatherings during the training process, one simple ritual trainers can utilize might be a set of questions to which each group member will respond at every gathering, such as the "How is your soul?" question that was a staple of the early Methodist class meetings. Special ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper can be meaningful.

Another possibility is to use music as ritual. Following the example of Matthias Zahnhiser in his class on "Crosscultural Discipleship" at Asbury Theological Seminary, I have experimented with asking students at the *Centro Integrado de Educação e Missões*, the mission training center where I serve in Rio de Janeiro, to choose a song related to the content of a course I was teaching. We would sing that song at the beginning of every



class period. I discovered that the material of the course and the song became associated with each other in the minds of the students. Singing the song would prepare us mentally and spiritually for tackling the issues to be discussed that day. More significantly, the simple ritual of singing the song together proved to serve as a focal point of group identity, and was an effective bonding tool. The point: trainers can be creative in using symbols and rituals that will help bind missionaries into teams that are mutually supportive, and also to help make the presence of God more concrete. Given the widespread subcultural distrust of symbols and rituals among Brazilian evangelicals, it will be important to exercise care in using forms from the general Brazilian culture or from Christianity itself that might carry negative connotations for them. But there appears to be something in Brazilian cultural religiosity that responds to symbols and rituals. If one can find contextually appropriate ways to discover or create meaningful rituals and symbols, it may prove helpful to Brazilian missionaries once they arrive on the mission field. The more isolated the field may be, the more meaningful simple symbols and rituals might prove to be. Beyond that, missionaries need to be aware of the power of symbols and rituals in their new cultural context. Perpetuating the Brazilian evangelical habit of ignoring their existence is not a positive option.

### Relational Capacity

There are three dimensions of relationships that will be important to the missionary on the field—team relationships, relationships with one's mission agency and supporting churches, and relationships with people from the host culture, both Christians and non-Christians. Following is a brief look at some dimensions of Brazilian culture that influence

these relationships, and a consideration of some of the implications for contextualized mission training.

One of the things pointed out in Chapter 3 is that, in general, Brazilians often struggle with a cultural inferiority complex in comparison with Europe and North America. This inferiority complex does not derive from any actual deficiency in Brazilian culture or the Brazilian people. It is a byproduct of the colonial experience, and the fact that while Brazil is simply different in some important aspects from the West, the standard by which Brazil has been measured over the centuries is a Western standard.

To be sure, it would be inaccurate and unfair to generalize to the point where one claims that this historical sense of inferiority in relation to Europeans and North Americans affects all Brazilians. But for those who are impacted by it, there can be at least two different ways in which it makes a difference within an international team. First, some Brazilian missionaries really may think that they do not measure up to Western missionaries with whom they serve on mission teams. This sense, if one is prone to it, may be accentuated or reinforced by Western missionaries' higher salaries, more comfortable lifestyles, and larger ministry budgets.

There can be an opposite effect as well. We are in a period of rising nationalism in Brazil. Consequently, some Brazilian missionaries, instead of treating European and North American missionaries deferentially within their teams, may hold them in suspicion, have a tendency to overreact to perceived slights, or to hold something back in relationship. It is important for Brazilian missionaries who will be working in international teams to identify their feelings as Brazilians toward colleagues from other nations, and let God speak to their hearts about any need to correct either misplaced deference or hostility.

While Brazilian missionaries working on international teams will have to examine their own inner attitudes, Western missionaries, and mission agency leaders, must realize that history puts on them the burden of having to prove themselves to missionary colleagues from developing nations. There can be no pretensions of superiority. Rather, Western missionaries need simply to treat their Brazilian and other developing world colleagues as equal and valued partners. It may be necessary to prove this attitude over a period of time, but once Brazilians recognize that North Americans or Europeans are serious in their commitment to accept them as full partners, any existing barriers will fall.

Members of international teams need to relate to one another as co-workers and as brothers and sisters in Christ. Developing intimacy and understanding on an international team, however, is not something that happens automatically. It requires interaction, sensitivity, perceptivity, empathy, and a servant spirit.

Another dimension of culture that requires adjustments and sensitivity on the part of international team members lies in differing attitudes toward time. Missionaries from monochronic cultures like the U.S.A. can be expected to have tendencies to value the kind of planning and scheduling that help them make the most efficient use of time. Brazilian missionaries, on the other hand, will have a tendency to focus on relationships and to have a more laid-back attitude toward time. Such differing attitudes can produce conflict on international teams if team members do not understand the values and priorities of their colleagues.

There are many potential minefields on the way to a strong, mutually supportive team. These are just a couple of them. For those who are preparing to serve on an international team, it is important to include training on understanding the cultural



background of fellow team members and what kinds of dynamics might be expected.

Ideally, the team can come together for a pre-field time of training together under the supervision of missionaries experienced in the crosscultural dynamics of international teams. With that kind of training, conflicts based on cultural misunderstandings could be reduced. Areas of cultural strengths could be identified and valued, consciously embracing diversity and thus strengthening the ministry of the team.

Other dimensions of Brazilian culture are relevant both for team dynamics, and for understanding the sometimes tense relationship between Brazilian missionaries and their agencies. Of course, there is nothing particularly Brazilian in the existence of tension between missionaries and agency executives. It is a frequent reality in crosscultural missions. However, it is now possible to identify some specifically Brazilian twists to the dynamic, in order to understand it better and work toward overcoming some of the difficulties, beginning in the training process. This will be done at various points along the way through the remainder of this section.

Hall's study of context levels provides a theoretical framework which sheds light on a complex set of dynamics that might present serious problems when missionaries from high- and low-context cultures serve together. From the perspective of writing for a low-context audience in North America, he warns, "If the LC (low-context) person interacting with a high-context culture does not really think things through and try to foresee all the contingencies, he's headed for trouble" (Hall 1989:127).

Reading from the multi-cultural perspective of mission leaders, that warning can be two-sided. Mission leaders from high-context cultures also must be aware of the potential pitfalls of mixing their missionaries on teams with missionaries from low-context cultures.

On an international team, low-context team members serving under a high-context leader could easily feel that they were being denied the autonomy that their level of competence would warrant, and that they were being subjected to unreasonable and stifling control. Missionaries from a high-context culture, on the other hand, may feel that a low-context leader is not taking them or their ministry seriously if he or she fails to give them enough input and feedback.

Members of an international mission team that mixes members from high- and low-context cultures may have very different ideas of what to be able to expect and count on from other members of the team. “High-context cultures make greater distinctions between insiders and outsiders than low-context cultures do. People raised in high-context systems expect more of others than do the participants in low-context systems” (Hall 1989:113). For a high-context Brazilian, to be an insider in a group implies a high degree of interdependence, intimacy, and sharing of information. If they have low-context North American or northern European counterparts who treat the team relationship as a merely professional one, with information shared only on a “need-to-know” basis, the situation will be ripe for destructive team dynamics.

In Brazil, trainers also have to think about what pratfalls may await high-context Brazilian missionaries serving in low-context cultures. These are only some of the dynamics that require crosscultural awareness and sensitivity. There are others. But the dynamics involved in the issue of context levels are sufficient to alert us to the need for pre-field crosscultural training for international teams, geared toward internal team dynamics, for missionaries preparing to serve with colleagues from other cultures.

There is another level of relevancy here for Brazilians and other missionaries from high-context cultures. Not only will high-context team leaders on the field feel the need to exercise control over those serving under them; agency leaders “back home,” who usually do not have direct and prolonged experience on the missionary’s field of service, will nevertheless feel a high degree of responsibility for missionaries’ actions and performance. Not surprisingly, they will want missionaries to “be obedient,” or “submissive to authority,” phrases heard more than once from agency executives. In terms of Brazilian culture, this is perfectly reasonable. But from a Brazilian missionary on the field, dealing with a culture that his or her superiors do not personally know, we can expect a natural tendency to want to follow his or her own judgment when it conflicts with directives arriving from headquarters. After all, they are on the field and know the situation. The potential for conflict between a missionary and the agency leadership on this point is very strong, so much so that it demands attention during training.

Training should help missionaries accept the need for a system of accountability. Missionaries who are responsible to no one can be dangerous. It is important to help candidates see that, as new missionaries, it will be some time before they know enough about their field to have a credible voice within their agency regarding strategy and field policies. They will need to “follow established procedures.” At the same time, it would be a good idea from the beginning to be attentive to the kind of input that senior, well-inculturated missionaries are allowed in dealing with agency leadership, and make sure that they can live with the agency’s management style.

This discussion brings up, once again, the fact that in Brazilian culture, there are different sets of rules for different social domains. Previously, the relevance of this reality



was explored in regard to ethical behavior. It is important as well to consider the significance of this element of Brazilian culture for relationships within mission teams, and between the missionary and agency leadership.

A mission team has certain characteristics of family. It is a place to give and receive friendship, love, and mutual support. This environment calls for rules from the domain of the home. But a team also has tasks to accomplish, which would bring to the fore rules from the street. It can get complicated. “DaMatta looks at rituals and social dramas—the big national parties such as Carnival (Mardi Gras) to the interactions of everyday life—to show how Brazilians are constantly negotiating between a modern, egalitarian code and a traditional one” (Hess and DaMatta 1995:10). Even where one would expect to find egalitarian principles at work (street rules), hierarchical and personalistic factors (house rules) may dominate a Brazilian missionary’s thinking.

This is a major danger for international teams that include Brazilians. Western missionaries may be perfectly comfortable going back and forth between the personal and the professional dimensions of a relationship. However, if a Brazilian has truly adopted the mission team as “family,” there can be no such switching back and forth (see Appendix 6).

The cultural differences at work here are unwritten, and largely remain in the unconscious background for members of a team. But failure to recognize these differences can cause serious misunderstandings. The only way to avoid potentially serious negative dynamics due to this kind of lack of awareness is to deal with it in training. Preferably, members of an international team can have a period of training together, not only to get to know one another, but to learn about each others’ cultures (including their own), and to

forge a blended culture for the team. This will not eliminate misunderstandings on the team, but at least blindness to major cultural issues will not be a major contributing factor.

Failure to define which domain defines the rules can also be a cause of tension between the missionary and the mission agency. Street rules concentrate power in the hands of executives. Missionaries want to be valued as persons, which brings into play the domain of the home. If executives fail to communicate to missionaries a sense that they are valued as persons through what missionaries perceive as heavy-handed and unilateral enforcement of rules, there can be problems. Executives can minimize the reaction to rules enforcement through other expressions of a personal dimension to the relationship. These include field visits, letters, phone calls, and the availability of pastoral care when it is needed.

If at any point, all things considered, missionaries feel that they are being treated as individuals, not persons in relationship, there are ways for them to assert their personhood. Remember from Chapter 3 that in Brazilian culture in general, rules are usually applied to the unconnected, the individuals, the nobodies. To the extent that one is connected, one can get around the rules through the use of *jeito*. One way, then, to interpret a missionary's flaunting of the rules is to see it as an assertion of their personhood. Consequently, executives who are concerned with missionaries who ignore or subvert organizational rules and policies have at least two options. One would be to stay in the domain of the street, enforcing the rules through an exercise of institutional power, and forcing missionaries to submit. The other way would be to demonstrate that the executive values the missionaries as persons, eliminating their need to assert their personhood by flaunting the rules. There is always the possibility that some missionary will try to

presume too much and take advantage of the personal dimension of a relationship with superiors, but that can be handled more easily than a general rebellion.

How does training come in to this? For one thing, it should be obvious by this point that agency executives could use some training of their own. Convincing them of that, however, would not be an easy task, and at any rate that is outside the scope of this study. But what is relevant is the emerging profile of a need that trainers can fill in helping missionaries and agency leaders better understand one another. Trainers are in a unique position to do this. Ideally, they will be living in community with candidates and in touch with their concerns. Candidates will feel close to trainers, and learn to trust them. Thus trainers can help future missionaries understand the perspectives of their agency leaders. On the other hand, trainers are the professional colleagues of agency executives, each serving a different function in leadership within the mission movement. It is possible to establish a relationship of mutual respect between equals, in which trainers might help executives understand the concerns and perspectives of those serving under them. Probably, this is a niche that trainers will perceive more readily than executives. However, by intentionally cultivating this kind of intermediary role, it is possible for trainers to contribute to the mission movement by facilitating understanding between missionaries and their agency leaders.

In considering different factors in what is involved as Brazilian missionaries arrive for the first time on a new field, it should be remembered that Brazilians get things done through connections. Relationships are everything in Brazilian culture. Brazilians who receive security and protection from their personal connections with family and friends have to feel particularly vulnerable in a move to a new field where they arrive with no



social identity, no personal connections with anyone in a position of authority, or any established personal relationships at all. This should be a strong factor in considering whether Brazilian missionaries should go to open new fields on their own, or only as members of teams. Clearly, every individual and couple should make ministry plans on the basis of their own personality and gifts. Many Brazilians are very effective working apart from teams. However, here is one indication that most Brazilians, especially early in a ministry, would benefit from being “connected” to others. During training, Brazilian mission candidates should reflect on their own capacities and preferences in terms of working with teams and the degree of isolation they can handle, and the kinds of connecting relationships they need upon arrival in order to thrive. Trainers need to help them in this kind of personal assessment.

Upon reflection, it may be that this need for connectedness provides the key to understanding why a number of Brazilian missionaries and mission executives like to work with international missionaries and mission agencies that already have an established presence on pioneer fields. If Brazilians are used to getting things done in the bureaucracy through their connections, then it becomes easy to understand the sense in them teaming with international groups that have logistical experience in opening new fields.

### Task Readiness

Task Readiness is the category in this model that lends itself most easily to attending Brazilian missionaries’ plea for more practical training. Every element of training discussed so far, if done properly, will have practical applications that students can see and understand. No theory worth mentioning in mission training will fail to have a practical dimension. The essence of missiology is learning to take theories and principles

from a wide variety of disciplines and putting them to use in defining and accomplishing the mission task. Nevertheless, it is in this category that the practical dimensions of training will be most readily apparent.

To affirm that for candidates to be able to leave training ready for the task ahead requires that they actually learn during training is, to say the least, stating the obvious. Yet it seems equally obvious that the logical question is, “How do students learn?” Yet it does not seem to me that this question is receiving the attention that it deserves. One significant indicator of learning style preferences is context level.

The cultural context level has an important effect on how people learn, and what kinds of methodologies trainers should utilize in the learning (not necessarily the *classroom*) situation. “A common fault of teachers and professors [in the USA] is that they pay more attention to their subject matter than they do to their students, who frequently pay too much attention to the professor and not enough to the subject” (Hall 1989:88). This observation calls attention to the fact that North Americans who work in training Brazilian missionaries need to be aware of their cultural tendency to overemphasize the transmission of academic material, a low-context value, rather than on working with students in relationship. On the other hand, trainers do need to stretch learners at the point of helping them learn more from formal academic study methods and, especially, to learn how to apply classroom theory to life and ministry. The fact is that the tendency for high-context people like Brazilians is to learn more from their environment, experiences, and network of relationships than from reading and theoretical thinking.

Learning from context is fine as long as learners are operating within an environment in which they have a background of experiences and a network on which they

can rely—in other words, where they are already contextualized. But missionaries always have to be ready for new situations. The level of context common in a missionary's native culture, as well as the level of context in the host culture and one's ability to "read" that context, are factors that play a major role in how one deals with the constant stream of new experiences that a missionary must face in adapting to a new field. For example, Hall has found that in a high-context system, "HC [high-context] people can be creative within their own system but have to move to the bottom of the context scale when dealing with something new...." (Hall 1989:127). In contrast, low-context people "can be quite creative and innovative when dealing with the new but have trouble being anything but pedestrian when working within the bounds of old systems" (1989:127).

It can be inferred from this that missionaries from high-context cultures like Brazil can be expected to be more creative when facing situations to which they can connect something from their experience. Merely by going to a host culture that is also high-context, it could be that they will grasp instinctively some of the cultural nuances in a high-context culture that escape their North American or northern European colleagues. However, when something strikes them as truly new and different, they do not have the context they need to let their creativity flow to the maximum. A very real danger confronts them when they try to create artificial connections between new experiences and something from their past. If their analogy is not an accurate one, they easily can make false assumptions and make some serious cultural mistakes.

One training strategy that could help missionaries from high-context cultures "play to their strengths" would be to take candidates in training through simulations and role-play exercises of situations they are likely to encounter on the field. This will help them



feel when they get to the field like, “This is something I have dealt with before.” To be helpful, these role-play situations must be similar to what they will actually face on the field. Since trainers cannot know from their own experience the full array of experiences that candidates will face on a variety of different fields of service, it would make sense for trainers to turn to mission agency executives with personal knowledge of various fields, as well as to experienced missionaries from fields culturally similar to those for which candidates are preparing, for role-play situations similar to those which candidates can anticipate. Any accurate sense of familiarity and context that trainers can provide will allow Brazilian candidates to work more from their creative strengths when they encounter situations on the field.

The process of identifying and developing one’s spiritual gifts is an obvious and essential element of task readiness. Before entering a mission training program, candidates should be required to have identified and used spiritual gifts in a way that allows churches to affirm that they exhibit both a sense of call and evidence of spiritual gifts that will be useful in crosscultural ministry. However, in the experience of close community that should characterize a training center, it is to be expected that members of the community will discern gifts in candidates that had to that point escaped their notice. However, discerning gifts is only the beginning. Spiritual gifts must be used to be developed. In addition, sometimes candidates discover gifts by participating in ministries that are new to them. The reader may remember the story recounted above of a candidate who, in fear and trembling, entered a *favela* for the first time and, in the process, discovered a passion and a calling that took her completely by surprise. Instances of similar experiences will be

common occurrences in training programs that take practical ministry as seriously as it should be.

Practical training contributing to task readiness also includes a vast array of practical skills such as training in how to learn a language, auto mechanics, computer skills, sewing, cutting hair, first aid and general health care training, how to do home schooling, and any number of skills that can be useful on the field. The more remote or primitive a field is, the more the missionary will need this variety of skills in his or her toolbox.

### Missiological Implications

The first missiological implication of this study is that contextualized missionary training enhances the prospects for contextualized mission practice by candidates on the field. Trainers and agency leaders can talk all they want about contextualization, but if it is not modeled, candidates cannot be expected to take seriously what they are hearing.

The second missiological implication of this study is that the Brazilian cultural trait of *immediatismo* presents potentially serious problems for the long-term health and effectiveness of the Brazilian missions movement. The demand for quick results from missionaries, rooted in *immediatismo* and reinforced by expectations based on the extraordinary growth of the gospel in Brazil over the last several decades, is unrealistic. This is especially the case for missionaries sent to unreached people groups, where results can be expected to come much more slowly. The missionary comments contained in Table 8 demonstrate the emotional contrast between missionaries who sense that agency and supporting church expectations are reasonably grounded in field realities, and those who

feel that the expectations put on them reflect Brazilian cultural realities that are not relevant in the fields where they serve. The transparent frustration and discouragement that flow from these unrealistic expectations can be expected to negatively impact missionaries' sense of fulfillment in crosscultural ministry, therefore becoming a factor to be considered in evaluating attrition rates.

The third missiological implication of this study is that an understanding of cultural factors may reduce conflict between missionaries and agency executives, resulting in greater unity of purpose and effectiveness in ministry.

The fourth missiological implication of this study is that contextualized missionary training puts candidates more in touch with their cultural roots and, therefore, with themselves. Knowing one's self is a necessary first step in becoming a well-adapted, integrated, bi-cultural person. The Brazilian struggle in trying to define a sense of national identity magnifies the importance of helping Brazilian candidates think through issues of self-identity and the influences that their native culture has exercised in shaping them as persons.

The fifth missiological implication of this study concerns the future geographical placement of missionaries. Once missiologists start thinking about the factors in the missionary's native culture that should be taken into account in designing their training, the logical next step is to apply those same cultural factors in deciding where in the world missionaries from any given country are likely to be more effective. This could be done by comparing and contrasting characteristics of the missionary's native culture with characteristics of possible host cultures.



The sixth missiological implication of this study is the conviction that if mission candidates are taught to recognize and affirm the cultural lenses through which they read Scripture, they will be likely to encourage and participate in that process within the host culture, thus promoting the practice of doing local theology in their field of service.

The seventh missiological implication of this study is that because serving in an international team is a crosscultural experience itself, it calls for serious crosscultural training beforehand, ideally bringing all members of new international teams together for training and bonding before departure for the field.

The eighth missiological implication of this study is that fitting training for crosscultural mission service to the realities of one's native culture represents an example to the multitude of Brazilian churches seemingly content to rest on imported theologies and worship patterns. Mission training can show the Brazilian church that it is both possible and desirable to be thoroughly Brazilian in one's faith and life while being thoroughly Christian at the same time.

The ninth missiological implication of this study is the fact that with the focus on spiritual formation and character development, this model draws attention to being, in addition to doing, as a foundation for mission.

### For Further Study

This study has touched on several promising areas for further research. They are mentioned here briefly as pointers for future researchers:

First, both the literature and conversations (informal and related to this research) I have had with missionaries and Arab Christians point to similarities between Brazilian and Muslim cultures. What degree of affinity exists, what are its roots, and how can these similarities be used as bridges in Christian mission?

Second, interviews with missionaries made it clear that their supervisors' lack of field experience and formal missiological study undermine their working relationship. How can missiologists offer training for agency executives without it being perceived as a threat? What are some of the most important subjects to be treated?

Third, serious research is needed on how Brazilian Christians who have operated within the mystical, pre-modern Brazilian worldview represent a resource for Western churches in reaching the post-modern West.

Fourth, research is needed on contextualized methods for teaching Brazilian missionaries how to learn a language directly from the people, using LAMP and other programs that have been introduced since the development of the LAMP method as a springboard for a contextualized Brazilian approach.

Fifth, Brazilian experience with international teams makes it evident that US missionaries need training on how to work with international teams. What training is out there? Is it geared for US missionaries before they go and meet their team, or is there anyone doing joint training of new international teams before departure for the field? How would one set up and staff that kind of undertaking? What would be some of the advantages in doing so?

Sixth, methods of training North American missionaries may be contextualized in the sense that they were developed mostly in the US, with perhaps some Western European

influence. But that does not address the main question, which is, “What does it mean to the host culture for someone to be a missionary from the USA?” The North American missiological community needs to turn the contextualized training model presented in this research around for a good look in the mirror, asking what it means to be a missionary from the United States, and considering seriously the issue of how to train mission candidates to develop the sensitivity needed to avoid some of the caricaturized behavior that smacks of neo-colonialism.

Seventh, what are the implications for Brazilian missionary training that the majority of Brazilians have been educated within what Paulo Freire called the “banking system” of education? Is Freire’s analysis still on the mark? A study is needed on program design and pedagogical methodology for the high-context Brazilian culture.

Eighth, I have said that there exists a need for training international teams together, before they leave for the field. Research is needed on what issues should be identified for treatment in this crosscultural training, and how that training should be designed.

Ninth, how can short-term field experiences most effectively be incorporated into the training process? Trainers and agency executives need to look at specifics of preliminary orientation, debriefing, training of field supervisors, methods of evaluation, etc.

Tenth, should context preference and other cultural factors (which are influenced by culture, experience and personality) be given a significant role in choosing what kind of a team situation (if any) would be best for a missionary?



### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter applies findings to a proposed missionary training model appropriate for the Brazilian context. First, it highlights some of the lessons learned during the course of the research process, particularly from the interviews with Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders. Second, it outlines the model by delineating a series of six broad categories of training needs which deserve attention as trainers seek to determine the needs of Brazilian mission candidates. Third, it describes the source of the data used in developing each category, and the process used in organizing it. Fourth, it explores a particularly Brazilian approach to each of the six categories, which can be used to inform the training experience for Brazilian mission candidates.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

## MISSIONARY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Tell me about your work in your current field of service.
2. What kind of preparation did you have before going to a frontier mission assignment?
3. Are you satisfied with the preparation you received?
4. How could it have been improved?
5. What do you wish you had learned before your departure that you had to learn on the field?
6. How have you been personally stretched in terms of your ministry skills? Emotionally? Spiritually? Physically? Financially? Theologically?
7. What problems have you encountered on the field for which you needed pastoral support? Did you receive the help you needed?
8. What do you understand to be your role on your field of service?
9. Describe your first nine months here.
10. How do people on the field see you?
11. What do you consider to be your primary responsibility on the field?
12. How much of this understanding did you learn in your training experience, and how much of it did you learn on the field?
13. Describe the kind of devotional life you had before leaving Brazil. How did it change on the field?
14. Is your personal devotional life your only source of spiritual support? What kind of spiritual support do you receive from your agency? From your



supporters back in Brazil? From missionary colleagues? From local believers?

15. What do you think your agency and supporters back in Brazil expect of you on the field? Do you feel their expectations are reasonable?
16. What impact has your missionary experience had on your family? What special counsel would you give to families preparing to go to a frontier assignment?
17. Do you work alone as an individual/couple, or are you assigned to a team? If you work on a team, is it international or exclusively Brazilian? Would you describe that experience?
18. If you work on a team, who is the team leader? What kind of authority and responsibility does the team leader have? How would you describe your relationship with your team leader (or, if you are the leader, with members of your team)?
19. Do you prefer to work on your own, or as a member of a team? Do you see Brazilians in general as best suited for individual or team ministry in a frontier mission setting?
20. Do you think that Brazilians would work best on an international team, or on an all-Brazilian team?
21. What do you think is special or unique in the contribution that Brazilians have to make to mission among the unreached?
22. What are some special difficulties or challenges for Brazilians involved in frontier missions? Are there some aspects of the Brazilian culture that do not

fit well with the culture of your people? How has this made your adaptation on the field more difficult?

23. Describe your experience and your ministry on the field. What have been your greatest joys? Your most difficult experiences?
24. What have you learned about yourself, and about your culture, as a result of your mission experience here?
25. Is there anything I did not ask, but should have?

## Appendix 2

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MISSION EXECUTIVES

1. The missions movement among evangelical Brazilian churches is exploding.

Where did this movement originate--in local churches or among the agencies? Which churches or agencies have been the spearheads of the movement?

2. How do you account for the fact that local churches with denominational ties turn to non-denominational organizations for their mission involvement? Do you see any potential dangers in putting missionary candidates from many local churches and denominations together in crosscultural missionary training? What are the potential benefits?

3. How can we offer adequate training without losing the particularities of the churches, denominations and agencies that support missionaries?

4. Does the focus on training and sending of missionaries for work outside Brazil have as a side-effect the devaluation of the ministry of missionaries working within Brazil, or a diminished focus on their ministries? If so, do you have any ideas that would explain why this would be the case, or how it works?

5. How do you understand the influence of the AD 2000 Movement over the missionary perceptions of the Brazilian church? Since the AD 2000 Movement has such a strong emphasis on the unreached peoples in the 10/40 Window, does this mission define the geographic focus of the Brazilian church?

6. There is a strong focus in Brazil on the 10/40 Window. While the numbers of Brazilian missionaries serving in pioneer situations has gone up over the last decade, it



could be that the greatest statistical gains in this category are yet to come. What plans do you have for sending missionaries to pioneer fields?

7. Brazilian mission leaders have expressed concern over major errors being committed by Brazilian missionaries in other countries. Do Brazilians really have qualities that make them more flexible and suitable for the evangelization of the unreached? Are there national characteristics that make Brazilians relatively unsuited for crosscultural witness? Or would it be more accurate to attribute the problems primarily to a lack of training, and to affirm the strategic role of Brazil in world evangelization with greater attention to this need?

8. What are some of the special qualities and experiences that Brazilian missionaries can contribute to the world church's task of taking the gospel to those who have never heard it?

9. What, in your mind, is the place of the local church in the preparation and sending of missionaries? What is the place of the mission agencies?

10. By what criteria do you measure effectiveness for missionaries serving in pioneer mission assignments?

11. What are some important issues in the training of Brazilian missionaries for work in pioneer missions with unreached people groups?

12. What are some of the urgent needs that you think must be addressed if Brazilians are to be effective in mission among the unreached?

13. What are the most common pastoral care needs of your missionaries?

14. Are there some other issues that have not been mentioned which you consider important?

## Appendix 3

## MISSIONARY TRAINERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is the training you offer like?
  - How many courses?
  - What is the object of the training?
  - What is the duration?
  - What are the requirements for entrance?
  - What subjects are taught?
  - What is the academic level?
2. Do candidates come principally from the cities or from rural areas? Do they have characteristics that are very different? Do they come primarily from a particular region or social class?
3. Philosophy/Theoretical Base:
  - Do you follow a standard model?
  - What are the priorities in training?
4. Do you offer preparation for working in teams? Would this be for Brazilian or international teams?
5. Do you train missionary candidates for one mission agency, or various?
6. What do the candidates need to leave here prepared for the field?
7. What are the cultural characteristics of the Brazilian missionary?
8. What are the strong and weak points of Brazilian for crosscultural ministry?
9. What has the academic preparation of Brazilian missionary candidates been like on the primary and secondary levels? Do you try to follow a traditional

academic model, or do you use another methodology? What are the strong and weak points of Brazilian academic formation for crosscultural work?

10. How is the training oriented specifically for the needs and cultural characteristics of Brazilian missionaries?
11. Do you have different training emphases for missionaries going to work with unreached people groups?
12. What type of relationship do you try to develop between professors and students?
13. How many professors have crosscultural experience?
14. Is there a difference between the time needed for training, and the time that churches, agencies and the candidates themselves are willing to give to training? If so, what is the principal problem—time, money, or the idea that there is no need for much preparation? How do you deal with these issues?
15. What are the differences in candidates between the time they enter and the time they complete their training? How do they change?
16. To what extent do financial considerations limit the training that you would like to give?



## Appendix 4

### HIGH/LOW CONTEXT COMPARISONS

From "Culture, Learning and Missionary Training", by James Plueddemann  
In *Internationalizing Missionary Training*, Wm. D. Taylor, ed., pp. 221-224

<i>Possible Cultural Factors</i>	<b><u>High Context Teaching &amp; Learning Preferences</u></b>	<b><u>Low Context Teaching &amp; Learning Preferences</u></b>
	Rural	Urban
	Agricultural	Professional
	Non-formal schooling	Formal schooling
<i>Culture and Thinking</i>		
Cognitive Style	Field Dependent	Field Independent
Cognitive Function	Concrete Operational	Formal Operational
Moral Reasoning	Conventional	Principled
Faith Development	Synthetic-Conventional	Individuative-Reflective
<i>Culture and Learning</i>		
Time	Polychronic	Monochronic
Communication Style	Indirect	Direct
Authority	Prestige given by group almost permanently; others respect rank; formal credentials important.	Authority earned by individual effort; dependent on performance.
Leadership Style	Highly controlling to maintain group harmony and conformity; charismatic personality; loyalty to group rewarded.	Allow significant group input on decisions; members free to question; leaders respect initiative by members
Conflict Resolution Style	Indirect resolution through mutual friends; conflict resolution may be avoided as long as possible.	Direct resolution through confrontation, with emphasis on speaking the truth.
Teaching Goals	Build interpersonal relationships.	Task-oriented.
Preferred Bible Passages	Bible stories, history, Psalms	Doctrine, epistles
Interaction Style	Group cooperation, conformity, harmony important	Personalized, with emphasis on individual ownership of ideas.
Religious Emphasis	Holy Spirit; gifts of Spirit; emotional commitment and feeling	Stress on correct doctrinal belief.
Major Focus	Testimonies; sharing of needs; Application of biblical passages.	Bible study; emphasis on interpreting major ideas of passage.
Missiology Focus	Spiritual signs & wonders; Prayer	Strategizing; statistical church growth.
Difficulty	Relating life needs to objective truth of Bible; can lead to heresy, syncretism.	Relating objective truth of Bible to life problems; can lead to dead orthodoxy.
Strengths	Building relationships; fervent, caring Christian commitment.	Solid understanding Of God's truth; emphasis on personal responsibility

# APPENDIX 5

## Edward T. Hall's Concept of Monochronic and Polychronic People

(Reproduced from *Understanding Cultural Differences*, p. 15)

MONOCHRONIC PEOPLE	POLYCHRONIC PEOPLE
Do one thing at a time	Do many things at once
Concentrate on the job	Are highly distractible and subject to interruptions
Take time commitments (deadlines, schedules) seriously	Consider time commitments an objective to be achieved, if possible
Are low-context and need information	Are high-context and already have information
Are committed to the job	Are committed to people and to human relationships
Adhere religiously to plans	Change plans often and easily
Are concerned about not disturbing others; follow rules of privacy and consideration	Are more concerned with those who are closely related (family, friends, close business associates) than with privacy
Show great respect for private property; seldom borrow or lend	Borrow and lend things often and easily
Emphasize promptness	Base promptness on the relationship
Are accustomed to short-term relationships	Have strong tendency to build lifetime relationships

## Appendix 6

### Extended Interview Report: Brazilians on International Teams

Throughout chapter four, I have reported brief excerpts from interviews with Brazilian missionaries responding to questions concerning their experiences as members of a team, including a focus on international teams. However, that pattern does not present an adequate format for relating the full extent of a very thoughtful response, one which brings into focus issues raised in the earlier exploration of Brazilian culture and which are highly pertinent to the Brazilian missiological community. Therefore, this appendix represents a more thorough reporting of and reflection on issues this missionary raised in response to questions 17-20 on the missionary interview form.

The missionary respondent related the following, reported here in the form of a synopsis very close to a word-for-word reproduction of the actual conversation: “Today I would say it [participation on an international team] has been an enriching experience, one that has been a shaping and polishing process for me. Two Americans are team leaders, responsible for administration, contact with the sending council, and with the local church. They do not concentrate power, but delegate. The relationship is ‘good’, but not transparent. The North American and Brazilian cultures do not combine well enough to permit transparency. The American confronts, while the Brazilian blows off steam somehow. The Brazilian has a tendency to hold things inside in an effort to avoid confrontation, and that can result in an eventual explosion. The Brazilian can then get very emotional, and that can get ugly, because the American doesn’t know how to handle that. The Brazilian can use really strong words that are not appropriate in English, because they don’t carry the same emotional weight in Portuguese. The Brazilian is



emotional, and will express feelings first, then think later. The Brazilian tendency is to take things personally, and not separate work issues from personal issues. If the work isn't going well, the Brazilian doesn't feel good about himself. In the team context, he can close up, not speak, and work very lethargically. The Brazilian needs affirmation, encouragement."

This Brazilian, from an interdenominational, international agency, makes some relevant observations for Brazilians working in international teams. It is interesting that the criticisms are of the Brazilian tendencies. This possibly is due to the Brazilian context and focus of the interview. It is also possible that the missionary was trying not to offend me as a North American interviewer. Some of the interesting issues are:

- 1) The observation that American and Brazilian styles don't allow transparency within a team relationship. If true, this will inevitably result in superficial relationships, which will be observable by outsiders and harmful to the way the gospel is perceived by the host culture. While I agree that American and Brazilian cultural tendencies do present barriers to transparency in personal relationships, I know that these barriers are not insurmountable. The point is to make sure that we do surmount them. That is an issue to address in the training process.
- 2) Failure to communicate openly also means that the team would lose one great value of the international team experience—the opportunity to examine issues related to the work from various perspectives.
- 3) The missionary presents the Brazilian tendency to be emotional and feeling-oriented as a problem, but it does not have to be characterized that way. These qualities can make Brazilians very empathetic and thus effective at establishing relationships with

nationals. Brazilian missionaries would thus be well equipped to identify with people and touch them on an emotional level with the gospel. This would be a positive balance to the American tendency to present the gospel in propositional terms and focus on strategy and programs. Mission is about people, and Brazilians can excel here.

- 4) Missionaries going to work on international teams need some advance warning on what they can anticipate from fellow team members, as well as how some of their tendencies could be misunderstood in the multi-cultural context. If North Americans and Brazilians are serious about working together in mission, they need to invest some time in learning about each other's culture and how each acts (and reacts) in certain situations. While cultural issues do present barriers to intimate, transparent relationships, these differences can be overcome—and must be.
- 5) An emphasis during training on personal growth and self-awareness can help the new missionary avoid some of the internal stress and emotional reaction inherent to being part of an international team.
- 6) The comment that the Brazilian doesn't separate personal and work issues sounds more like a North American characteristic to me. As North Americans, our professional identity is very much tied to our personal sense of worth. But remembering our discussion of DaMatta's concept about how home and street exist as different domains in Brazilian culture, and based on my own experience of sixteen years living and working with Brazilians, I am convinced that Brazilians are able to separate the two.

That does not mean that the missionary being interviewed here has not put his

finger on a real problem. I believe that while Brazilians can and do separate personal and work (home and street) issues, the question is knowing *when* a Brazilian is operating out of one domain or the other. That is a vital question because, as we have seen, there are different rules in each domain. Furthermore, interviews show that at least some Brazilian missionaries look at their team of missionaries as a substitute family on the field, a home away from home, a form of *parentela*. And in Brazilian culture, family and friends *never* treat each other on the basis of the rules governing the domain of the street. Things are *always* personal.

This observation brings us back to the missionary's comment that the Brazilian doesn't separate personal and work issues. In the context of a mission team, which a Brazilian missionary is likely to regard as a substitute family, fellow team members cannot demand that their Brazilian co-workers separate the two. Yes, North American colleagues can explain how the two are separated in their culture, and Brazilians can understand it intellectually. But I do not believe they can ever embrace it emotionally. The minute you bring street domain rules into the mission team, the team ceases to be family in the way Brazilians understand family. At this point, we are back to the missionary's observation that relationships between Brazilians and North Americans in a mission team can be good, but never transparent. How could they be, if North Americans impose a set of rules on the relationship that violates a value so dear to the Brazilian heart?

Continuing with the synopsis of my interview with the same missionary: "I prefer to work with a small, mature team. I am interested in quality, not quantity. I think Brazilians in general do well in a small team. Relationships are vital, but we have



problems working in groups because it is (culturally) difficult to confront problems (issues of “face” are involved). The Brazilian has an emotional need for warm caring in our friendships—you see that in the touching, the way women kiss, the way men embrace, the amount of eye contact. This gets complicated for people from other cultures. For example, privacy is a big issue for North American culture, but not for Brazilian.”

I asked if Brazilians work better on Brazilian or international teams. “You’re going to laugh. On a team with only Brazilians, you’ll end up killing everyone, and end up feeling happy about it afterward. But on an international team, the Brazilian can be very closed. The Brazilian is not accustomed to dealing with other languages and cultures because Brazil is so big. The Brazilian cannot be prepared to work on an international team without speaking English. Brazilians also have an inferiority complex in relation to North Americans that can result in aggressiveness or a stupid kind of nationalism. We also have trouble dealing with Germans and Dutch. The Brazilian is very indirect. People from a culture that is more direct are too aggressive for Brazilians. Brazilians can’t stand public embarrassment; and if it’s caused by a North American colleague, that’s terrible.”

In our exploration of Brazilian culture, we noted that Edward T. Hall warns of the potentially volatile mix when bringing together people from both high- and low-context cultures into close proximity. The observations of this Brazilian missionary on his own experiences as a member of an international team vividly illustrate Hall’s point, not in the sense of bringing us stories of violent conflict, but in reminding us of the serious barriers to overcome in working together on international mission teams

and the misunderstandings that too often arise between equally committed colleagues with different cultural backgrounds. Chapter five will revisit this subject in an attempt to suggest possibilities for training that take these realities into account.

**Holistic Training**  
**Table # 1<sup>1</sup>**  
**Appendix 7**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Academic Focus	<p>“The intellectualism of our seminaries breaks the missionary spirit. My flame was lit despite my academic background, thanks in large part to a missionary professor.”</p>
	<p><i>Seminaries need to do more to integrate the academic, spiritual, and practical.</i></p>
	<p>“All my theological training completely left out missiology.”</p>
	<p>One missionary speaks prophetically to an issue that must be treated in the academic part of our curriculum. We must recognize, however, that this issue goes beyond the academy, and that it must be dealt with in the mission agencies and the churches as well:          “Without a theology of the kingdom, the denomination will always be the primary reference point. Experience on the pioneer field will give a new perspective, but I am not sure that the Brazilian missionaries will learn. Denominational agencies want to recreate denominational churches on the field. This is not a question of flexibility or adjustment of strategy; it is a theological issue. We need a wide-open theology of the kingdom of God and a good biblical theology of mission. If we are able to do this, Brazil will be a valuable instrument for fulfilling the Great Commission.”</p>
	<p>A non-denominational agency leader, responding to a question concerning the best place to train missionaries, said that “The seminary today is irrelevant—it only helps to maintain what you already have. It doesn’t give any base in understanding culture—not even Brazilian culture. It doesn’t emphasize evangelism. Pastors want to implement something from the past.”</p>
Spiritual Growth/ Character	<p>“I learned (on the field) to be practical and transparent. My word and my life have to give the same message. Our people are sensitive to this.”</p>
	<p>A trainer has this to say: “Training has a lot to do with the crosscultural; but beyond this there is character, that has a whole lot to do with the spiritual. All the theory doesn’t help without being broken, having the spirit to give up certain things. Missiology already is in second place.”</p>
	<p><i>Before going to the field, quiet time was about “that moment,” but during the day, I had more own life. On the field, I learned to depend the entire day on Him. Here in Brazil, everything is easy.</i></p>

<sup>1</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 4 & 5



Practical Focus	<i>Training is cut off from missionary practice—even trainers do not have missionary experience.</i>
	“I needed more information on my field—I arrived on my field without a team, without any language ability, and not even knowing that my country has various peoples and languages.”
	“I needed more and more specific information on our people group.”
	Apart from practical ministry-related skills and knowledge, respondents said that they wished they had been trained in other practical areas—such as computer skills, auto mechanics, electricity, and sewing.
	A missionary felt that before departure for the field, training was needed on “how to live and work with a team. Seminary was just theory, without pastoral accompaniment, or experience with a team. On my first field, none of us had experience with a team, and it was a tremendous shock.... You learn character and being at peace with yourself in fellowship. If you don't learn these things before you go, they become greater with the crosscultural issues on top of them.”
	<i>One missionary said that he would have liked to have been trained by someone who had actually been to the field.</i>

**Crosscultural Component**  
**Table # 2<sup>2</sup>**  
**Appendix 8**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Training Issues	A missionary reports that in training, "I needed to have been 100% convinced that I would have experiences very different from anything I could have imagined or expected."
	<i>Training needs to have a stronger focus on culture shock, not just on dealing with the culture shock in moving from Brazil to the host culture, but from having mostly Christian contacts to living in a non-Christian environment where there is little contact with other Christians.</i>
	"I would like to have learned in training how to deal with culture shock. The professors in Brazil don't know about it because they have never experienced it! This is especially difficult because it is very hard for Brazilians to let go of their culture."
	"We could have used training in how to deal with culture shock as a family."
	A well-known and highly respected single missionary relates that she needed more training in dealing with culture shock and crosscultural communication issues. She reports that she arrived without friends, without any other Brazilian around, without literature. She found when she got to the field that "they"—the national church—had rules against everything, and she wasn't prepared for it.
	<i>One executive says that it is important to identify cultural characteristics that create difficulties for Brazilian missionaries on the field, because training has to deal with these characteristics in order to diminish the potential for problems on the field.</i>
	Agency Executive says that the greatest barrier to the Brazilian missionary developing a good work on the pioneer field "is the lack of preparation for crosscultural work, knowing how to respect the local culture. I know missionaries that planted bilingual churches in Latin America, with the missionary pastor speaking Portuguese in the worship service because he didn't learn Spanish....The lack of crosscultural preparation results in missionaries using the language of the colonizer. It is the language of suffering and exploitation. The church has a lot of this colonizing process—language, custom, denominational structure. The Brazilian is accepted for having suffered colonization, but ends up being a colonizer [if he or she goes to the field] without crosscultural training."
Adaptation	<i>I learned to appreciate the intelligence of people in the host culture and that the prejudiced notions about them aren't true at all.</i>



	<p>"The people taught me. I had an idea of guarding my privacy, but the people are always ready to receive us, always ready to make a place at the table for us."</p>
	<p>"I don't know if I am a Brazilian any more; I just know I was born in Brazil."</p>
	<p>"In leaving our homeland, we leave behind our status and ability; we have to depend on their acceptance. I became aware of who I was. It is emotionally difficult to accept the challenge of self-knowing."</p>
	<p>"One result of culture shock was that problems that wouldn't be significant in Brazil became gigantic issues and problems on the field."</p>
	<p>Adaptation of the children to a new school on the field was difficult. One missionary reported that in the beginning, her children had severe stomach aches, caused by their fear of school.</p>
	<p>A married female missionary to a Muslim people said: "The first months on the field was the only time in my life I spent a month and a half in depression. I was taking care of children while my husband learned the language. Our preschool son had problems, shouting in school, which is contrary to his nature. I was stuck cleaning house and taking care of children, which spurred depression and held back my involvement in the culture and my adaptation. A wife can live in another world, alienated from ministry. Eventually, God opened doors for me to use my secular profession in a ministry role."</p>
	<p>"The family has to identify with the people. Our tendency would be to identify with missionaries. We see a lot of missionaries who live with the missionaries, not the people."</p>
	<p>"Every Brazilian arrives already knowing everything, fighting with (the nationals), speaking before they know the reality. One pastor in his fifties had barely arrived, and was criticizing even the use of a tribal language instead of Portuguese. He didn't adapt to anything. The Latin arrives already speaking, but the African takes one or two years evaluating you. This pastor created a huge problem in his first meeting."</p>
	<p>A highly respected veteran who has endured great hardship said that <i>the Brazilian missionary, if well-prepared, adapts well because of coming from a culture of improvisation, and is able to adapt to precarious conditions because Brazil is a third-world country.</i></p>
	<p><i>On the field, I felt emotionally needy, missing family and friends. But identifying with the people helped a lot. (Other responses from this missionary indicated a high degree of identification and relationship.)</i></p>
Relational Style	<p>"Africans only trust after a long time—very different from Brazilians."</p>
	<p>"It was a period of high anticipation and a sense of dependence on God because I didn't know how to reach my people group. It was a time of waiting on God. I had to proceed slowly, make connections, and not speak about Jesus prematurely."</p>



	<p>"It was especially difficult for me not being able to communicate at first, because I am very extroverted."</p> <p>"We were well received by the people and learned to develop strong friendships and get close to them."</p> <p>"The Brazilian missionary enjoys great success in identifying with many peoples because it is the country of soccer and miscegenation; the Brazilian is known for soccer and Carnival."</p> <p>"What is most important in Brazil is not the truth, but relationships. In Brazil, relationships are everything; here (on the field), not so much. In Brazil, you would sacrifice anything for a relationship, even truth; that isn't so here."</p>
Incarnational Lifestyle	<p><i>I needed more cultural studies—preparation for the painful process of laying aside your Brazilianness to identify with your people.</i></p> <p><i>I had to learn to limit my role as a woman in Muslim culture so as not to cause offense within the culture; I learned to accept people with a culture completely different from my own.</i></p> <p>"I feel a responsibility to take care of my family and support my husband. Since men in our people group have more than one wife, they always have one around, and I felt a need to be there supporting my husband. Another factor is that foreign women are always viewed as a target of opportunity, and Brazilian female missionaries have to prepare for that. The common view of Brazilian women is that they are easy, worthless, even prostitutes—the women of Carnival." (While this was not expressed explicitly very often, it was an undercurrent that emphasizes the need for both families and singles to present a holy lifestyle as a witness to their people.)</p> <p>"The Brazilian woman in Brazil is fighting for social gains; among the Arabs, she has to go backwards, and this is frustrating. I had to change my way of dress—I could no longer use jeans or anything with short sleeves. I had to keep quiet, although I did find that I could speak more openly with young people. I found out that older women act as police, and that limited me."</p> <p>"When you work in another culture, your mask falls off. You show who you really are."</p> <p>Agency Executive says: "We fail a lot in the lack of preparation. The seminary graduate, full of theory, is the worst person for the mission field. The missionary doesn't have to be prepared to go and teach, but to go and learn. Just look at the life of Jesus. He arrived in the culture, learning, in order to teach later. If he wasn't able to arrive already teaching, that is much more true with us. There are a lot of sad stories about denominational missionaries, trying to impose their structure. The colonial era is over."</p>
Language Learning	<p>"To work with Arabs, you have to have contact and start language learning before going."</p>

	Several missionaries said that they wished they had learned the language before going or, if that wasn't possible, any language.
	Several missionaries indicated that they needed to learn English before going to the field in order to better work on international teams or with other mission agencies.
Contextualized Theology	"I learned to interpret the Bible in accordance with the host culture, rather than from a Brazilian context."
	"My theology did not change, but my practice did."

## Superficiality of Brazilian Religiosity

Table #5<sup>3</sup>  
Appendix 9

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Emotionalism	<p>“It’s hard to respond (to the question of how the missionary’s devotional life changed on the field), because I’ve always had ups and downs—before and after going to the field. Maybe the biggest difference is that while before it was more emotional, now the presence of God is penetrating more my inner being.”</p> <p>“There’s a certain fantasy, unrealistic, immature quality to our culture.”</p>
Need for long-term commitment	<p>One missionary reports consistent, sustained support from Brazilian churches made up of systematic prayer, literature, visits, and communication, and claims, “That’s what has kept me on the field.” In other words, this is a testimony of a deep spiritual life in community as essential to long-term commitment; the missionary was not left to flounder on his own. Most respondents report a low level of this kind of support. It is fair to claim, I think, that long-term commitment is a spiritual issue just as much for the supporting churches as it is for the missionaries themselves.</p> <p>“Coming to the pioneer field, you are going to go through a meat grinder. It will be a transforming experience. You have to be sure that you have a genuine call from God, not just a desire to see the world. Without a clear sense of call, you will come back disillusioned.”</p> <p>“Don’t go without a certain conviction of your call. There have been moments when this is what kept us on the field.”</p> <p>“Our lack of perseverance is our major problem.”</p> <p>“We lack commitment. The Brazilian really is a little vague on what that means.”</p> <p>One respondent related, <i>The local people have a saying that the Brazilian missionary arrives with a lot of gas in the tank, but easily becomes discouraged and goes back home.</i></p>
Need/Desire for Deeper Spiritual Life	<p>“My unreached people group made me less ‘religious.’ When I got there and made friends, there was no difference between me and my Muslim friends. Now, I have changed as I seek to become a new person in Christ with a new heart and worldview.”</p> <p>“On the field I feel more need for God, and learned to seek him more and depend more on him.”</p>

<sup>3</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 6, 7, 13, 14, 16 & 24



	Single missionary living with a communist family learned that her devotional life before leaving Brazil was not nearly as deep as she thought or needed.
	"I dedicate more time to my devotional life here on the field. Crisis provokes more dependency on God."
	"We lived in a village 99% Muslim. One day I was in front of my window and I asked God, either everything that I believe is wrong and they are right, or they are all wrong and I am right. What do I really believe? I wasn't worried about eschatology, but about who is Jesus in my life. To experience Jesus in my life at that moment was all I needed; Jesus was my motive to grow spiritually. I became his friend and follower. I grew in my prayer life. I had nowhere to run except to the arms of Jesus, or I would be totally alone."
	"Without the Bible, you die."
Need Theology of Suffering in face of Persecution, Privation	My son went through depression for five years. It was a suffocating family experience.
	We have grown spiritually as a result of our experience. We deliver ourselves daily to the Lord as we live with the threat of persecution.
	My wife entered into depression.
	One missionary recounted the story of how he had been arrested in a Middle Eastern country for sharing his faith with a Muslim, threatened with death, imprisoned, tortured, and eventually expelled from that country. Another told of living through the privations of an African civil war, and spending eight months as a captive of a guerilla army while officially categorized as "disappeared."
Need for spiritual care	"I always need pastoral support. Godly men can help me avoid serious mistakes; I need to be able to converse with people who have had experience."
	<i>Our agency is very much present in our lives, and this is a significant spiritual and pastoral support.</i>
	"Responsibility for the missionary's spiritual life belongs to the missionary."
	<i>There is an ongoing need for pastoral support on the field. A single person in the Muslim world is looked upon as something very strange. Having a leader on the field who can give pastoral support is very important, comforting.</i>

	<p>“When I get correspondence from my agency, it’s either to ask for a report or to prepare me for a cut in financial support. In (more than ten) years, we only received one personal correspondence for the purposes of support. A form letter doesn’t mean anything. They’re depressing. We see other missionaries on the field receiving from their agencies support we never receive. We do receive correspondence from churches, and this helps. Local Christians are young in the faith, but they have already taught us a lot.”</p> <p>“The issue of pastoral support is very serious—in Brazil, the idea still is simply throw the missionary on the airplane. (On the field, as a norm) I had no electricity, telephone, or mail service. One time a church in Brazil telephoned me live during their worship service, but I couldn’t say anything because of the emotion.”</p> <p>Agency Executive’s Take: “We cannot meet all the necessities. The missionary needs pastoral care, but we can’t be baby sitters. The missionary needs to take up the cross.”</p> <p>An agency leader, responding to a question about the need for pastoral care of the missionaries, told me, “I am afraid to open my e-mail. I care for missionaries by e-mail and telephone; I encourage, counsel, give my opinion, and instruct; I listen too....I go to the field and do retreats with other members of our board, who are all involved in caring for the missionaries. The work is emotionally draining—without pastoral care from all members of the board, they would break down on the field. Also, I link new missionaries on the field directly to local partners. We do not open a new field without a local partner. They help take care of the missionaries, too.”</p>
Need for holistic gospel	<p><i>We need to pay a lot of attention to the spiritual preparation of the candidate. Character will determine our posture on the field. This can either establish or destroy the ministry and the missionary. This ought to be part of the training. Muslims are very holistic. The missionary has to be a person of God all the time, with a life completely dedicated to God. Your life has to reflect the glory of Jesus. You can’t say ‘Now I am acting out my religious life’. A holy, integrated life is the best testimony for a Muslim. In the West, we lose this focus, dividing the spiritual from the material.</i></p>

	<p>“Without a theology of the kingdom, the denomination will always be the primary reference point. Experience on the pioneer field will give a new perspective, but I am not sure that the Brazilian missionaries will learn. Denominational agencies want to recreate denominational churches on the field. This is not a question of flexibility or adjustment of strategy; it is a theological issue. We need a wide-open theology of the kingdom of God and a good biblical theology of mission. If we are able to do this, Brazil will be a valuable instrument for fulfilling the Great Commission.”</p>
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# Home & Street: In Which Domain do we do Missions?

Table # 9<sup>4</sup>  
Appendix 10

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Family	“I learned the value of the family in my host culture, and the value of our family in communicating the gospel. Among our people, decisions are not individual, but made in solidarity. The family is a key. This has great implications for evangelism.”
	<i>Due to experiences on the field, the family is more united and concerned about how they can help each other.</i>
	“Not having a church, home worship becomes much more important.”
	“They say that young children adapt. Not necessarily. You have to talk with them. Their little hearts are important.”
	“I was concerned because I left my father back in Brazil shortly after my mother’s death.”
	A single male missionary tells of how God has been at work in his family in Brazil since he left for the field—significant because extended family is very important in Brazilian culture, and the sense that God is at work among loved ones left behind will be a big comfort to Brazilian missionaries.
	Several female missionaries said, in a very matter-of fact manner, that they saw their primary role as supporting their husband and taking care of the family.
Persons/Individuals (A cultural status & role issue)	<i>Arriving on the field, I felt useless, incapable, like a nobody. This messes with your emotions. You have to submit to a new reality, in my case limiting myself to working with women and children (because of the Muslim culture). Even so, I feel it’s unjust.</i>
	“At the start, I was a nobody.”
	“I went through a grave identity crisis, close to pathological. I had been a dynamic pastor and university professor, and all of a sudden I was a language student, and they treated me like a first-year student.”
Private/Public	SEE APPENDIX 3
Need to be Connected	<i>In training, there needs to be more specific information given on your future field, including hearing from missionaries with experience there.</i>
	“When you’re in a country without friends or family, you have to depend on the Lord. I learned to pray, and many difficulties took me to the foot of the cross.”

<sup>4</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 & 16

	<p>“In the beginning, we had visa problems and it took quite some time to get our situation legalized.”</p>
Hierarchy; Relationship to Agency	<p>“Training needs to focus more on missiology and missions, and less on the authority of the organization.”</p>
	<p>In response to a question about problems requiring pastoral support, one missionary indicated that he felt a constant need to “produce, produce, produce,” without corresponding attention to spiritual nourishment.</p>
	<p>A missionary among a Muslim people group talked about the fact that nobody from her agency knew her field or even had any experience as a missionary on the field. “They know nothing about security issues, or life on the field. They don't even have any missiological training. My reality is unique, without any other Brazilian. Yet I have to obey my leadership even if they don't know the first thing about my reality, or about the culture on the field.”</p>
	<p>“Coordinators that were never missionaries don't understand anything.”</p>
	<p>An agency leader, asked about the need for pastoral care among missionaries of his agency, took off in another direction, saying that there was a tendency toward independence in the missionary in the sense of having difficulty in submitting to leadership.</p>



## Brazilian Culture and Teams

**Table # 10<sup>5</sup>**  
**Appendix 11**

Sub-Category	Interview Responses
Team Dynamics	A significant number reported that their team provided a needed system of spiritual support on the field.
	A significant number also reported that team dynamics were a source of tension and conflict. For some, the team provided by the agency to support the missionary became the missionary's biggest problem.
	A Brazilian team leader admitted that as stress mounted, he became more autocratic, and that this wasn't good.
	A single female missionary reports, "For me, the team has become family."
	A missionary who works on an international team among an unreached people group says that she couldn't work with a team of Brazilians because they are trained to work alone. She finds more liberty and encouragement on an international team. On a Brazilian team, she thinks there is too much competition, and one or the other member will want to project themselves to the forefront.
	<i>Emotionally and socially it is good to be in a team, but Brazilians don't always work best in a team....Everyone should be a servant, but questions of status and leadership arise, and it gets difficult.</i>
	"Brazilian missionaries fight a lot—not over theology, but methodology." However, "International fights are worse yet."
	A trainer talks about one team that is all Brazilian, but has descendants of Germans, native Indians, people from the state of São Paulo, and people from the poor and isolated northeast. "Even though they are all Brazilians, they have different worldviews."
	Another significant concern that missionaries raised repeatedly was preparation for working in teams; some mentioned specifically the need to learn how to work on a multicultural team. One missionary said, "Seminary was just theory, without pastoral accompaniment, or experience with a team. On my 1 <sup>st</sup> team, none of us had experience with a team, and it was a tremendous shock. Many times singles are isolated within a team. You learn character and being at peace with yourself in fellowship. If you don't learn these things before you go, they become greater [concerns] with the crosscultural issues on top of them."

<sup>5</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview form, questions 7, 17-20



International Team Dynamics	One missionary reported emotional problems—serious at first, especially related to issues of culture shock—not so much culture shock from the host culture (the missionary said, “I was prepared for that”), but the culture shock that came from working as part of an international team.
	One missionary reports that her problems weren’t with the nationals, but with missionary teams (this missionary served on international team, and this was a factor). One of the primary issues was strategic. The missionary was put together with a team after arriving on the field, but this missionary had a vision for a different people group than the one being targeted by the rest of the team. The team tried—successfully—to impede the missionary’s efforts to reach out to the unreached people group among whom she was ministering.
	“On an international team, the Brazilian is always at the bottom.”
	One Brazilian reported working well on a team with a North American team leader, observing that the leader’s style was to be more of a counselor or encourager than a boss.
	“On an international team, the Brazilian has to be ready to adjust. Everything needs to be discussed openly ahead of time.”
	“As a Brazilian on an international team, I adapted better than my wife. We feel like we ended up losing part of our Brazilian culture.... We went prepared for culture shock with the nationals, but we had few issues with the Arabs, and many with international missionaries.”
	Brazilians defend each other on an international team. As one put it, “Your problem with a Brazilian missionary is my problem, and if it’s my problem, it’s yours.” He added, “Every Brazilian gets involved in the problems of the others. If the team leader angers one Brazilian team member, he angers the whole group.”
	“It’s hard to work with Brazilians on an international team because the (typical) Brazilian wants to insist on doing things the Brazilian way. With Americans or Europeans, we have feelings of inferiority. We have this complex, and we react against ‘imperialism,’ (based on the idea that) ‘I also have value.’”
	The missionary thinks that at first, Brazilian missionaries should work with Brazilian teams. Later, after adapted to the host culture, one could tackle the cultural issues of working in an international team, where the host culture becomes the point of union between missionaries from various countries.
High-Low Context Issues	“The North American and Brazilian cultures do not combine well enough to permit transparency...The Brazilian tendency is to take things personally and not separate work issues from cultural issues” (see Appendix 3).
	Sometimes it is difficult to confront problems on an international team because issues of “face” are involved.

	Agency executive speaking: "Brazil is a relational culture. In a team, the Brazilian talks, touches, expresses himself. Other cultures are individualist. When we put them together to work, it creates a strong shock. Training today has to emphasize anthropology and sociology (to help us deal with these kinds of issues). Secular executives value it; we don't."
Prefer Team or Individual Ministry?	The overwhelming number of respondents indicated that they preferred to work in teams, although there was widespread recognition that teams often have problems that need to be overcome.
	One Brazilian responded that Brazilians work better in teams, because "Brazilians need the group."
	Most Brazilian missionaries surveyed said that they preferred working on a team to working on their own, due to the mutual support and accountability that a team offers. One missionary put it succinctly: "Working alone (on a pioneer field) would be suicide." Another said, "To work with unreached people groups, it is not possible without being part of a team."
	"Among the unreached, we need teams."
	One respondent who found her team to be a blessing said that Brazilians generally should work individually, because her team was the only one she knew of in the entire agency that was working out.



**Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission:  
Missionaries' Responses  
Appendix 12<sup>6</sup>**

<b>Characteristics that Facilitate Mission</b>	<b>Characteristics that Present Challenges</b>
Intimacy and open friendship	Sensuality
Love	Triumphalism
Transparency	Too prone to improvisation
Open and communicative	Has to learn more than the local language in order to function on international teams, or as a bridge to learning the local language
Compassionate, Self-giving	Lack of crosscultural training
Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic background (miscegenation)	Lack of attention to pre-field character formation
Creative	Lack of practical experience in the ministry they will exercise overseas
Flexible, Adaptable	Feel very strongly the lack of family and friends, and prone to enter into depression because of this (especially singles)
Able to identify with and get close to people; hospitable	Lack of adequate financial provision and health benefits
Jeitinho—used positively	Lack of pastoral care
Extroverted, highly social	False expectations of quick results
Emotional way of self-expression	The Brazilian missionary easily becomes frustrated in cultures where it is hard to develop intimacy
Open to the fantastic (i.e., mystical)	
Strong spiritual focus in the culture	
Example of family life—similar in many respects to some of the unreached people groups, but the Brazilian Christian wife is treated as a person	
Contagious joy and happiness	
Brazilians were among the colonized, not the colonizers, giving Brazilian missionaries a point of identification. "People identify Brazil with samba, not politics."	
Facility in learning other languages	
Can identify with people suffering great economic hardship	
Highly musical	

<sup>6</sup> Responses drawn from Missionary Interview Schedule, questions 21, 22



The time/event orientation is similar between Brazilian and Arab cultures	
When asked what special contributions Brazilian missionaries can make among unreached people groups, a missionary tentmaker working as a professional in soccer replied, “Only one—we have the most important tool of identification in all the world— soccer. It’s a phenomenon. Brazilian missionaries can go anywhere, anytime, any way. No one can do that like we can. Brazilian missionaries and juntas don’t know about that. Americans and English have money and language, but don’t have open doors. We have the perfect platform. Music is universal, English is universal, but nothing is like soccer.	

## Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission: Executives' Responses Appendix 13<sup>7</sup>

Characteristics that Facilitate Mission	Characteristics that Present Challenges
Brazilians are a mixture of nations; Brazilians have physical characteristics that help them fit in among Muslims	Individualism is a problem for working in teams
Coming from a poor country, we know how to live and deal with precarious conditions—this is an advantage over a missionary from a richer country (2)	Our habit of touching can be a problem in some places—it's sometimes misunderstood
Jeito can be an advantage for Brazilian missionaries in getting things done	Jeito also presents ethical problems. (Calls jeito a Brazilian cultural imperative.)
Our physical characteristics help us in the Muslim world	Lack of sufficient preparation
Our history of having been conquered (which never really happened, but reflects the colonialized mindset)	Lack of spiritual maturity and character
Concept of time	Expectations of rapid results
Family life	Brazilian Imediatismo
(Capacity for) Friendship	Fragmented evangelicalism (we take denominational divisions to the mission field)
Brazilians establish relationships and accept the people better than missionaries from most other countries.	We are a legalistic culture, which makes for barriers in understanding the target culture.
Compassionate	Emotionalism can mask a lack of conviction regarding their call
Emotional in a way that helps them sympathize	The ease of planting a church in Brazil can provoke frustration when the results are delayed (they don't expect that it will take five years to learn the language, for example). They think there ought to be a jeitinho to facilitate everything.
They are aggressive and active in evangelism—this is a positive trait on a pioneer field (?-I would say that depends)	Being heterogeneous, Brazilian missionaries do not know who they are and what they are like; they don't know how to analyze themselves. So how are they going to analyze other peoples?
Sociable	Xenophobia is a danger.
They come from churches that are alive, with contagious worship, devotion, and	Brazilians are very social; they feel saudades and solitude much more than other

<sup>7</sup> Responses drawn from Executives' Interview Schedule, question 7

evangelism.	cultures.
They believe that God is the God of the impossible	Brazilian missionaries lack submission to authorities. Many unreached people groups have a social hierarchy, and this complicates the missionaries' relationships with the local people as well as the agency.
Brazilian missionaries have many abilities in ministries through sports, music, and with children.	Brazilians are accustomed to quick results in Brazil, which makes it difficult to persevere on difficult fields.
	They only speak one language, and are not accustomed to persevering in learning another language. They want to start their ministry right away.
	Coming from an open and responsive field may create difficulty in dealing with slow results on a pioneer field. Pressure comes both from within the missionary and from the Brazilian church.
	There is not a great amount of fidelity in financial support, forcing the missionary to return often and start from scratch.
	Many of the young people that want to go to the Muslim world do not have a university degree or a profession; their first task is to get some type of qualification. We have to explain this a lot to them and to the churches: the pioneer field demands professional qualifications.



# Brazilian Cultural Characteristics and Mission: Trainers' Responses

## Appendix 14<sup>8</sup>

Characteristics that Facilitate Mission	Characteristics that Present Challenges
Enthusiasm for the work (in other words, emotion)	Lacks commitment to match the enthusiasm
Communicative—bonds and integrates well, making friendships	Often takes too much of Brazilian culture—often without realizing it (music was especially pointed out)
Brazilian missionary is very tied to his/her family	Brazilian family orientation makes it more difficult for single missionaries
Does not represent a threatening world power	Many missionaries suffer from lack of adequate support
Hot-blooded—has the spirit to take on challenges (but can end up burning out)	Lacks staying power
Miscegenation gives us greater capacity to adapt to other cultures (repeated often)	Lack of crosscultural training
Ability to adapt (one trainer attributed this, not to jeito, but to the fact that many missionaries come from humble homes and had to learn to adapt to their situation.)	Nationalism is a problem—we want to plant churches like churches in Brazil, our food is better, etc. (I think this is more ethnocentrism or triumphalism)
Conviction of call	Too many abandon the call and return to Brazil
With jeito, the Brazilian missionary is able to make do and find a way around problems	Brazilian jeitinho ends up denigrating the Brazilian missionary (the respondents says that without crosscultural training, the missionary will use jeitinho in a negative way)
Improvisation	Language is a point of shock
Facility in making friends across cultures	Failure to respect the culture of others
Extremely creative	Saudade hits hard, as does the need to adapt one's diet. Saudade is the main challenge at the top of the list.
Flexible	Difficulty in recognizing authority
Spontaneity	Attempts to do mission on the basis of enthusiasm alone with a romantic vision, but without worrying about barriers like language and culture.
Ability to accept difficulties and limitations	The idea that Brazilians are different, something special; because they have soccer and jeito, they think they can do anything.
Other peoples accept Brazilians	The ingenuity to think that seminary training qualifies someone for any work in the ministry.

<sup>8</sup> Responses drawn from Trainers' Interview Schedule, questions 7, 8

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