

# Chapter 17: Cultural and Social Considerations

**Objective:** Participants will consider cultural and social factors when leading translation training and Church Owned Bible Translation work.

**Core Concepts:**

- Cross-cultural work requires us to recognize and respect cultural differences and similarities so we can communicate effectively.
- Teamwork and collaboration, and therefore trust, are essential to checking and refining a Bible translation.
- There may be cultural or social challenges, but our differences can make us a stronger team.

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ... Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way (Rom. 14:10, 13).

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being (1 Cor. 10:23-24).

After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands (Revelation 6:9)

**Intro:**

**Serving in a cross-cultural setting requires us to recognize differences and similarities among cultural groups so that we can communicate effectively. It is important to respect cultural protocols and practices when engaging with church partners and organizations globally.**

**For example:**

**In some cultures**, silence is an important part of communication, as it indicates good listening.

**In other cultures**, long gaps and silences can be seen negatively and people want to fill up pauses.

**In many countries**, it is preferable to invite small groups to discuss a topic or set of questions and for a leader from the group to provide feedback to the wider group. Asking an individual for a response can result in 'shame' for the person if they feel their answer is incorrect. This may make them reluctant to contribute to other group discussions.

**Time:** 30 to 60 min. depending on participation  
**Workbook p. 66**

**Materials:**

- ✓ White board
- ✓ Bible with place markers
- ✓ Slide Deck T3.Slides\_17\_Cultural.and.Social.Considerations

**Teacher's Notes:**



Cultural and Social Considerations  
AFTER THESE THINGS I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT MULTITUDE WHICH NO ONE COULD COUNT, FROM EVERY NATION AND ALL TRIBES AND PEOPLES AND TONGUES, STANDING BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED IN WHITE ROBES AND PALM BRANCHES WERE IN THEIR HANDS (REVELATION 7:9).

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**Training workshops that involve participants from different cultures provide an opportunity to learn together, and to celebrate and better understand differences.**

**Exercise:**

Choose three areas of culture—such as food, religion, marriage and family, work, housing, or recreation.

Share important information about the three topics you have chosen. When you're finished, a leader from your group will report back to the wider group.

**Teamwork and collaboration are central to checking and refining Bible translation. A trust relationship between translators is important as they work together.**

- **When thinking about the MAST process, which steps might cause difficulty from a cultural context?**

**Notes:**

Divide participants into groups of 4-5.

(Please be aware that in many cultures people are more confident to share in a group with people they know.)

Ask the group to choose a person to report back to the wider group.

The goal of this exercise is to find connections and build on common ground, while also appreciating differences.



Possible answers include:

- People may feel sensitive about asking others to check their work (such as senior church leaders asking congregational members and young people to check their translation).
- Women may not be expected to take an active role in translation.
- Young people may have strong faith but be seen as having less formal biblical knowledge.

- How can you deal with each challenge to lead to a positive result for the translation team?

Working as a team requires:

- Being willing to offer time and talents freely to the Lord (1 Chronicles 29:9)
- Taking the role of a learner (Matthew 23:12).
- Asking questions and willing to try new things. (Exodus 35:29)
- Valuing others in the team (Ephesians 2:10)
- Expressing appreciation for others within the team (1 Corinthians 16:17)
- Accepting feedback and recognizing others' opinions (Proverbs 1:5)
- Being willing to see our mistakes and try again (Matthew 18:4).

**Here are some important factors to consider when leading Church Owned Bible Translation training and selecting a Bible translation team:**

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Bilingual ability in the Gateway language and the Heart language to be translated.

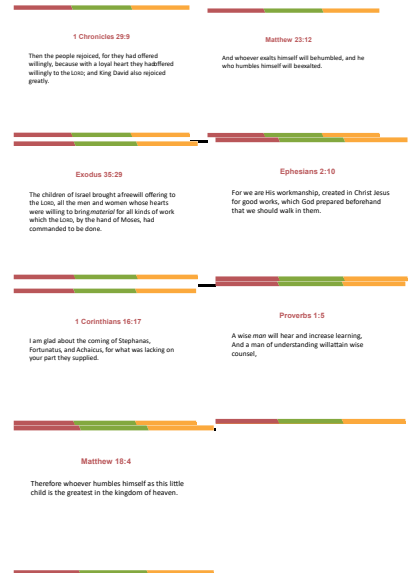
## Notes:

Address each challenge with encouragement.

(Romans 14:1)

Possible answers include:

- A cross section of men and women from the church community may be selected as translators, including pastors, deacons, elders, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders.
- Young people frequently have experience in the use of computers and technology programs, which is an asset to the translation work. Involving young people supports generational ownership.



- Biblical knowledge
- Experience with computers/technology.
- Existing relationships between the translators
- Involving women in the translation team (consider Lydia in Acts 16)
- Involving young people in the translation team to support generational ownership (consider Paul's relationship with Timothy)

There may be cultural and social challenges as we work together. However, our differences can make us a stronger team. It helps to recognize that parts of the process may be uncomfortable. The solution is not in trying to change culture, but in listening, respecting one another, and finding strategies to help the team to be successful in translation.

Remember: WHO we have in common is far more important than any differences.

## Notes:



### WHO

we have in common  
is more important  
than all our differences.

## Confirm:

Participants understand that cultural and social factors are part of working together as a team. They see that the MAST method harnesses the capacity within the church and allows translators to work together for God's glory.