

Mosaic (Week 2): Anthropology and Diversity

Practical Advice on Multiculturalism

Here's a full reprint of the practical advice we got yesterday from our resident anthropologist, Rachel Fisher, on how to interact well with other cultures:



"It's really easy to see other people doing things we may not understand, and immediately have a judgmental or defensive reaction to whatever it may be. That first thought, as we heard about from Jim a few Sundays ago, is our unconscious bias. A really important thing Jim said was that we can't control that first thought, but we can control our second thought and our first action. My advice is to let that second thought be "Why are they doing that?". This allows us to stop and think for a second because more often than not, we do something in our lives for the same reason.

So in order to help give you tools that you can walk away with, here are a few other things that you can try and work into your everyday life to appreciate other cultures.

- 1) Be self-aware of your own cultural identity. Understand where your motives for your traditions come from.
- 2) Be open-minded. Appreciate taking the time to learn how other people see the world around you. My favorite new way is a way Pastor Chris has mentioned to incorporate content (books, movies, music, and prayers) from those not like you.
- 3) Having an open and honest conversation with someone willing to do so is a great way to engage and gain an understanding of their culture.
- 4) Silently observe without judgment. Note the differences you see and let them show you how they make us all uniquely beautiful.
- 5) On calendars, all holidays are marked, if you see one you aren't familiar with, take a moment and look it up. Learn a little bit about it and why it's important to those that celebrate.
- 6) Try new foods. Go down different aisles in the store and see if there is a new meal or snack that you might enjoy from another place.
- 7) When meeting new people from a different culture treat them as individuals. People may share the same culture but express it in different ways that are unique to themselves.
- 8) Know that cultural awareness is not something that happens overnight. Be patient and allow any bias or misconception to be transformed with time. Once we start to understand people better it becomes easier to see the deeper similarities between us all and the common humanity within us that often gets missed and overlooked by judgment."

Dig In More This Week

1. Scripture reading this week:

- Read through Romans 1-4 and notice how St. Paul is trying to level the playing field, so to speak, by showing the fundamental sameness of humanity, whatever their cultural and religious differences: [Romans 1-4 NRSVA](#)
- As the majority group shifted in the New Testament church, its leaders gathered to discuss the tension and a route forward. Check out their gracious, wise conversation and conclusions in what we now call The Jerusalem Council: [Acts 15.1-35 NRSVA](#)

2. Learn more about the crucial difference between "cultural appreciation" and "cultural appropriation":

[Cultural Appreciation vs. Cultural Appropriation: Why it Matters](#)

[Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation](#) (from Canada's public radio, focused on indigenous culture)

[What's the Difference Between Appropriation and Appreciation?](#) (how fashion designers struggle with and think through the difference)

3. Appreciate the diversity and multicultural identity of the earliest Christian churches, or, in this case, the church in Antioch (as portrayed in Acts 13.1-5): [A multicultural church—Acts 13:1-3](#)

A Prayer for the Week

Adapted From Christian Aid – UK:

God of all creation, diversity, and dignity, we ask for Your Spirit to unite us where we face a lack of understanding and willingness in our churches, in our communities, and in our countries.

We ask for Your Spirit to inspire us in the face of the fear and pride present everywhere around the globe that results in such violence and hate, so that we may seek and come to experience Your Kingdom which is not of this world.

We ask for Your Spirit to give us courage to overcome our own misgivings, care for our neighbors, learn from people of different cultures, and respect both those like us and those so very different from us.

And we ask for Your Spirit to help us overcome all our divisions and hostilities so that we may live in peace, because in Christ You are reconciling all people to Yourself and to each other, in whose name we pray, amen.