

## **Review**

### **Teaching Cross-Culturally: An incarnational model for learning and teaching**

Judith E. Lingenfelter and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter  
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003

#### **Reviewed by David Sills**

Associate Professor of Christian Missions and Cultural Anthropology  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

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This book serves as an excellent introduction to the challenging task of teaching students from other cultures as well as a textbook for those being prepared to minister outside their home culture. The book grows out of the philosophy and groundwork provided by Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers in their work, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, second edition 2003. Both works emphasize the necessity that the cross-cultural worker become a 150% person. However, the teaching experiences of Judith, both in the USA and on the island of Yap, have yielded the heart of this work and made it thoroughly practical.

*Teaching Cross-Culturally* is designed for educators who plan to minister in a multicultural setting or in a culture that is foreign to the teacher. However, the uses of the book are many. Pastors, missionaries, medical personnel, and intercultural workers from many disciplines will gain valuable insights from this book.

The authors set out clearly the goals of the book. They want to help teachers to understand their own culture first. Second, these teachers must go on to become effective learners of the target culture, specifically learning how teaching and learning take place in the new culture context. Third, teachers are taught to incorporate biblical perspectives as they examine the interaction of diverse cultures. Fourth, the authors hope to guide all teachers in multicultural or cross-cultural settings to be as effective as possible while also enjoying their work along the way.

The Lingenfelters explain several key concepts that help to make the book so practical. One is the explanation of the power issues associated with being a teacher in various cultures. Another is the hidden curriculum that is taught along with the subject matter of the class. They also help us to understand the traditional ways of teaching and learning in other cultures. For instance, some learn by watching and imitating, others learn by doing (trial and error), some use rote memory methods, and many utilize oral methods of passing on traditional knowledge. The Master/Disciple relationship, or mentoring, method of teaching is presented in a way that demonstrates its strength for many cultures.

In their discussion of the role of the teacher, an interesting series of matrices are presented that show the relationships of four prototypes. For instance, the vertical axis represents the role in social games and the horizontal axis represents the group. The four quadrants are authoritarian, hierarchist, individualist, and egalitarian. Societies can be plotted on the matrix to determine social style or preference. The second matrix presents the four prototype teacher roles: teacher as

authority, teacher as patron/parent, teacher as facilitator, and teacher as outsider. The axes remain the same as before (group and role) and the teacher's role can be identified in similar fashion. The final matrix plots the learning style of the target culture as obedient, client/child, freethinker, or rebel. Using these matrices, the teacher in a cross-cultural setting can identify the society's "personality," their own teaching style, as well as the learning style preferred by the target culture. This enables the teacher to recognize areas where a clash of styles may occur and foster success in the teaching experience.

The authors emphasize the need to teach for change and the biblical transformation of the culture. The tools that they provide for cultural understanding and cross-cultural teaching will be a great help to anyone venturing into the realm of teaching in another culture. Included in the short 134-page book, is a very helpful bibliography for further study as well as a detailed index. In addition, there are questions for further research or reflection at the end of each chapter that enhance the book's value.

Judith and Sherwood Lingenfelter both earned their Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. She is an associate professor of intercultural education at Biola University and he is provost/senior vice president and professor of anthropology at Fuller Theological Seminary.