

Michael Banks—Cultural Engagement Value (Updated)

Part I

Definition

DTS values relationships with diverse individuals, cultures, and ideas that result in acts of evangelism, dialogue, application, and service that are biblical, courageous, and compassionate.

Leadership Goals

Because I want to *immersively* interact with cultures other than my own I will...

1. I will serve in a Muslim culture.
2. Serve in intercultural communities across ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural lines.

Strategies

1. I will serve in Vickery Meadows with staff from the Navigators Ministry (Gretchen Palmquist) who operate and do ministry in this subdivision/Dallas Neighborhood.
2. I will meet with a Muslim background family that I have developed a close relationship with in Garland.
3. I will get to know Jamie Coleman from Nexus Neighborhood Outreach and seek his help and wisdom as I interact with the diverse Muslim community in Dallas, Texas (<https://nexusneighbor.org/>).

Resources

1. Study materials from Dr. John Bitar on tactics, strategies and the heart behind cross-cultural (specifically Muslim) evangelism.
2. Read portions of *Encountering the World of Islam* by Keith E. Swartley.
3. Read portions from *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* by Christopher J.H. Wright.
4. Meet with Dr. Sam Won to discuss missions, academics and intercultural contexts.

Measures

1. Serve in either Northwest Community Center or Vickery Meadows with Navigators staff 2-3 times per semester.
2. Study Materials by Dr. Bitar by September 31st 2023.
3. Connect with Jamie Coleman (Nexus Outreach by March 2024).

4. Read portions of Swartley and all of Christopher Wright by February 1st 2024.
5. Meet with Dr. Won every several months (or when it is convenient).

Part II

Overall Reflection

For my cultural engagement value I hoped to engage frequently as possible with friends and communities in Dallas from Muslim backgrounds, and or, Islamic contexts. This goal was realized through ministries that operate in the DFW area and independent relationships through DTS. As I engaged in daily practical ministry, I also sought to important academic concepts and, *vice versa*, allow academic concepts to be influenced by everyday practical ministry.

Artifacts with Descriptions

1. Practical Guidebook: Ministry In Muslim Context + Witnessing to the Islamic World through the OT 2.
2. John of Damascus, Theological Essay: Engaging Theopraxy

Learning Reflection

Over the course of my academic research, the context thought that arises is: how does this appeal to everyday life? In some ways, academic settings are a controlled environment. Certainly study has extremely indelible impact on personal growth, and helps one meditate on the deep things of God, but on some level we also have to test our skills in outreach, evangelism and apologetics. By serving in the Vickery Meadows and Garland areas in Dallas, TX I was able to engage in personal relationships and also seek to apply truths I was learning from reading Fathers like John of Damascus: (aka *Yanah ibn Mansur ibn Sarjun* (c. 650-749)). By engaging with writers like Swartley and C. Wright, my horizons have been broadened in how I see not only the Old Testament as it intersects with Islam, but also how I see the mission of God as a whole.

Lifelong Development Statement

As I look toward the future, and working with *WorldVenture*, I hope to continue practicing what I preach in the classroom, by engaging with the demanding tasks of urban evangelism, apologetics and community care. Eventually connecting with Jamie Coleman of *Nexus Neighborhood Outreach* I was able to gain invaluable insight into how we as Christians can help others with social, financials, material and physical needs, even as we point others to Jesus. Jamie very graciously helped one of the families I've been meeting with for the last several years, after hearing their need, and moreover shared the gospel with this family as he did so. Continuing to share the gospel with such friends and families, as I lean into future ministry will be essential.