

The Missionary Game

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Purpose

To increase consciousness of the various positive and negative images of a missionary, depending on where the observer might stand.

Participants: 8-100 players organized in 2 or 4 teams, maximum 25 people per team.

Assumptions on which the exercise is built:

1. The term (key word) upon which the exercise focuses refers to ideas in which the learners can be expected to have substantial interest.
2. The learners have some awareness of the varieties of ways the term (key word) is used.
3. The learners are capable of thinking and talking beyond the narrowness of a dictionary-type definition.
4. Within the group the variations of sophistication regarding the concept are not excessive.
5. There is a distinct contrast between the commonplace and the normative or authoritative views of the term (concept).

If any of these assumptions is not reasonable for a given group of learners, the exercise is not appropriate.

Procedure

1. Divide the group into two or four teams with approximately the same number of people in each team. Provide each person a blank sheet of paper and a pencil or pen.
2. Leaders says, "Working individually and quietly, each person is to write down all the good and bad reactions that come to mind when I give you the key word—Missionary. Work quickly. You have five minutes."
3. After five minutes call a halt. Ask each group to combine the lists of individual participants. Allow about 10-15 minutes.
4. Organize into groups of four people using the most convenient and quickest method (e.g., cluster closest chairs and move "stragglers" to designated locations.
5. Using the synthesized list in each group to complete the following tasks:

Leaders says,

"From your group's list find examples of the following:

- Ideas or word associations that have their origins in *culture* or the ordinary (and even prejudiced) ways that people think about missionaries. Mark at least five of these items with the letter C.
- Ideas or word associations based on a *biblical or theological* understanding of mission. Mark at least five of these items with the letter B.
- Ideas or word associations that are *ambiguous*. They could represent either responsible or misguided understandings, depending on what else is going on in a person's thinking. Mark at least five of these items with the letter A."

Identify five words or associations that could be representative of each of these three groups:

- Those who support missionaries with funds and prayers. Mark these associations with the letter S.
- Those who are the subject of the missionary's outreach. Mark these with the letters NC (for not yet Christian).
- The Christians who are already there, if any. Mark these people with the letter C.

Total Group Discussion

Put the emphasis on the reality of varying perceptions and appreciation of the missionary's person and work, even among Christians. Questions that may be used to facilitate discussion include the following:

- What are the most undesirable associations? Why? Who holds these views? What can the missionary do to turn these around?
- What are the things that missionaries do that result in certain of the less desirable ideas? Are these inevitable?
- What are the positive and yet realistic images? How can they be encouraged?