

to 93 percent) communication is nonverbal. In other words, learning how to read nonverbal cues and signals is nonnegotiable in cross-cultural settings. As you read the short case study, try to imagine what things you might have looked for in the nonverbal channels of the store clerk.

CASE STUDY: FIXING THE CAMERA

CHIP NOONAN

A man walked into a camera shop hoping to have his expensive camera fixed. He showed it to the shopkeeper. "I love this camera a lot. I would really hate to lose it. Is there any way it can be fixed?" he asked somewhat insistently.

"There's a good possibility," the shopkeeper hesitantly replied.

The man looked the shopkeeper in the eyes and pleaded, "I really, really need this fixed by Tuesday because I'm flying back home. Can you have it fixed by then?"

The shopkeeper paused and then slowly nodded his head and said, "Yes."

"Great," said the man as he turned and left.

However, when he returned he found not only that his camera had not been fixed but also that the shopkeeper could not fix it and never had any intention of trying. The man stormed out of the shop. He felt deceived and was angry.

As he talked with me about it he shared his anger and frustration and noted:

"But I will tell you what will happen to people who tell lies. They will be thrown into that lake of fire and burning sulfur. The Bible is crystal clear in its condemnation of lying. Accordingly, if I ask a person to do something, and he replies, 'Yes'—although he has no intention of fulfilling that request—then this would be a good example of a lie. Obviously, his yes did not mean yes as our Lord commands, 'But let

your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.' Thus the person who says yes but really means no would be telling a lie."

But is the picture as clear as the man thought it was? Does it matter that this scenario took place in a different country? Or that the shopkeeper is from a culture where people communicate indirectly? Perhaps many would say no. One might appeal to the absoluteness of the biblical morals, which are binding on every individual regardless of tribe or tongue, including the shopkeeper. Perhaps some would even say that this cultural practice reflects humankind's fallen nature and Satan's hold on a people group. However, though I hold to the infallibility of Scripture and the absolute truth contained within its pages, I trust that serious consideration of what a lie is and what communication and indirect communication entail will reveal that indirectness is not necessarily lying, even saying yes but meaning no.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What did the man with the camera communicate nonverbally to the shopkeeper?
2. How might you advise him to approach similar situations in the future?

in A. Scott Morgau, Evvy Hay Campbell, and Susan Greeney,
*Effective Intercultural Communication: A Christian
Perspective*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014)
pp. 129-141

9

Contexting

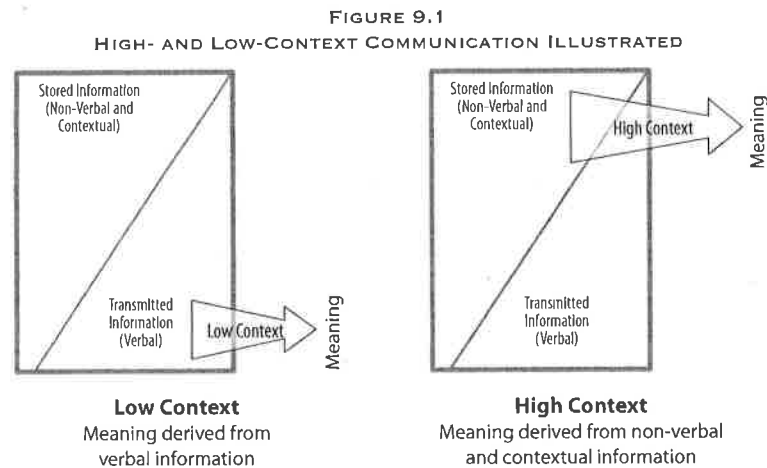
How do we understand the meaning of what someone is trying to communicate when the person speaks to us? More specifically, to what extent do we listen to the words, and to what extent do we look behind the words to see what she is actually trying to say? The extent to which we are enculturated to pay attention to the "ocean of information" mentioned previously results in two different patterns of communicating called high context and low context, which we explore in greater depth in this chapter.

WHAT IS CONTEXTING?

Contexting refers to a strategy of choosing the appropriate mix of verbal and extraverbal communication to get a message across (Hall 1991a, 85–116; Hall and Hall 1990, 6–10; see also Kraft 1983, 183–84; Gudykunst and Nashida 1986; Chua and Gudykunst 1987; Ting-Toomey 1989; Elgstrom 1994; Dsilva and Whyte 1998). Certain cultures and situations within cultures (e.g., negotiations) demand that more attention be paid to the context, while other cultures (and situations) require more attention to the actual words rather than their context (e.g., computer programs).

As can be seen in figure 9.1, a low-context communication is one in which the meaning of what is being communicated lies in the explicit words used in the communication process. This style of communication, according to

Edward Hall, is more commonly found in places such as Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, generally among northern European peoples, and in the United States (Hall 1991a, 59–77). When a low-context communicator asks people how they are doing, she will typically not pay any attention to things such as state of dress, facial expression, or other contextual issues; she will only listen to the verbal response. Computer programming is a perfect example of low-context communication, since a computer will perform the instructions *exactly* as given, no matter what the programmer intended for it to do.



As figure 9.1 also shows, a high-context communication or message is one in which most of the meaning is either in the physical context or internalized in the persons, while very little is in the coded, explicit, verbal part of the message. This style of communication, according to Hall, is more commonly found in places such as China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, southern Europe, and Arab and African countries (Hall 1991a, 59–77). It can be seen as a type of “mind reading” because the words are not used to convey what is being communicated, and both sender and receiver must be on the same page mentally for the communication to be understood.

While Hall’s basic idea has been criticized (e.g., R. Chuang 2003), studies that have attempted to validate the high- and low-context paradigm have produced generally persuasive results (e.g., Kim, Pan, and Park 1998; Kim et al. 2001; Yamazaki 2004).

In low-context cultures, direct, verbal skills are valued, for the ability to give detailed, exacting information is important. By contrast, in high-context cultures, indirect, nonverbal skills are valued; direct verbal skills may even be

regarded with suspicion. Hall recognizes that there are variations within every culture. For example, the more intimate the relationship, the higher the context of communication. Conversely, computer programming is low in context, whatever the culture, since computers are unable to context communication (unless they are programmed to do so in a low-context way).

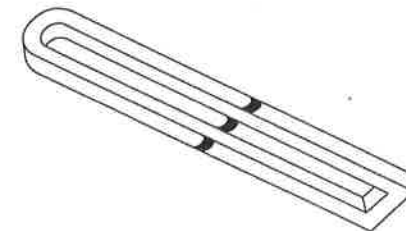
It is also important to note the relative position on the contexting scale for people as individuals. Even within a single culture, some people will be higher-context communicators than the average person in that culture and some will be lower-context communicators. For example, we must be careful not to think of all Japanese as high-context communicators. On average, they will be much higher than Germans. However, this is a statistical average that will not apply in every individual case.

CONTEXTING: THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD

Contexting is not limited to verbal communication. People context through two entirely different but related processes. The first is the *internal*, which takes place inside the brain and is a function of either past experience (programmed, internalized contexting) or the structure of the nervous system (innate contexting) or both. The second is the *external*, which comprises the situation and/or setting in which an event occurs (situational and/or environmental contexting).

We context internally through each of our senses. Optical illusions take advantage of our desire to context information from two-dimensional drawings of three-dimensional objects. The object portrayed in figure 9.2 is physically impossible, even though it can be drawn, so the picture does not make sense to our brains because we cannot context it properly.

FIGURE 9.2
OPTICAL ILLUSION



We context the sounds we hear. Hall notes experiments in which people were able to “hear” excised portions (in this case, up to a full syllable of a word) of a doctored tape recording without even recognizing that it was doctored

(1991a, 118–19). In terms of touch, hot and very cold water feel alike, a fact used in torture by making the victim think hot water will be poured on him and then using very cold water instead. Our olfactory contexting is used by perfume makers to help the women who wear their perfumes send messages to the people around them. Our sense of taste is connected to our sense of smell such that it is very difficult to eat good-tasting foods when we are in an environment with bad smells.

We also context externally, reading the setting in which an event occurs in a variety of ways (using, of course, our sensory abilities). Table 9.1 shows several of the external ways we context messages.

TABLE 9.1
ENVIRONMENTAL-INTERPRETIVE CONTEXTING

Type	Example
Spatial (Proxemic)	Each of us has a certain "intrusion distance"; if someone comes within that distance, we will read more than just physical proximity into the situation.
Temporal	Definitions of "promptness" vary from culture to culture, and our definition will determine how we interpret an arrival that is before or after an explicitly stated time.
Architectural	Buildings are not an end in and of themselves—they are for the people who will inhabit them. For example, office space (size, private, public, etc.) communicates different things in different cultures.
Behavioral	We constantly "read" our perceptions of the behavior of people in light of the context. "Actions speak louder than words" exemplifies this idea.
Websites	Studies done on the amount of contexting on websites have found what might be expected for people of the culture in which the website was created (Würtl 2005).

No matter where the society is on the scale, within that particular culture communication events are also relatively higher and lower in context. Through the socialization process, people learn the contextual rules for their culture and apply them "automatically." This automatic process is short-circuited in the intercultural setting, when our normal modes of operating are likely to lead us to misinterpretations of what we see going on around us until we have learned the new set of rules.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

A clear example of the contexting of communication is seen in Abraham's negotiation for a burial site for Sarah in Genesis 23. Abraham approaches the Hittite men of Hebron and announces that he would like to buy a suitable burial site for Sarah. They give him permission, and he indicates the site that he would like and its owner, Ephron.

It is then that the text mentions that Ephron was present among them, and Ephron responds to Abraham. Notice that Abraham does not go to Ephron privately or ask him face-to-face in front of the rest of the people. He simply indicates the plot he wants to purchase. If Ephron is willing to sell it, he can respond publicly. If Ephron does not want to sell it, all he has to do is remain silent, and no one will lose face. It is likely that Abraham knew Ephron was present, and that is why he came. He also knew not to ask Ephron directly but rather to ask the leaders of the town on his behalf.

Ephron not only responds but also offers to give the plot to Abraham in front of the witnesses. However, this is not a case of Middle Eastern hospitality and generosity. Ephron is not actually expecting Abraham to accept the land as a gift; he is simply informing Abraham that he is willing to sell the land. Abraham understands the message and informs Ephron that he will pay the full price. Again, Ephron tells him that he will give him the land, but he now mentions that it happens to be worth four hundred pieces of silver. However, what is that among friends? Again Ephron invites Abraham to simply accept the land as a gift.

At this stage in the biblical narrative, it is noted that "Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms" (v. 16), and they sealed the deal when Abraham paid Ephron four hundred pieces of silver in front of everyone. Abraham was not obstinately refusing a free gift, because he knew that Ephron was not really offering one. Instead, he was following formal bargaining protocol, understanding what the meaning of the message was despite the words that seemed to contradict what was being communicated. Ephron was not being deceptive; he was following the rules of negotiating for his time and people. Abraham was likewise adept in playing the same game, and they came to mutually agreeable terms. Both knew the words to say, which words to ignore, and which ones had particular meaning and how to understand them. It is a clear example of high-context communication.

CONTEXTING AS A SIGNALING SYSTEM IN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships in all cultures are subject to contexting. We are constantly reading and receiving signals that we need to interpret well if we are to successfully navigate the development of relationships within our own culture and especially across cultures.

For example, the longer a group is together, the higher in context its internal communication. This can be seen in teenage cliques, which use "in" vocabulary, dress, cosmetics, hairstyles, products, and so on. Someone who wears the wrong thing or acts the wrong way will soon get the message—even if it

is not a verbal one. This phenomenon is also found in churches, clubs, offices (the "corporate culture"), and the like.

Because there is little or no shared background, all cross-cultural relationships will by definition start as lower-context relationships. However, this

The American seems very explicit; he wants a "Yes" or "No"—if someone tries to speak figuratively, the American is confused.

visitor to the United States
from Ethiopia, Kohls 1981, 8

does not mean that both parties will automatically shift into a higher-context way of communicating. Unfortunately, they often act as they would with people of their own culture and are frustrated when their actions or words are misread as a result. By noting that they must start their relationship in a lower context fashion than they might otherwise prefer, we mean that the ability of each to "read" the other will be

limited until they have enough in common to know what the other is like and how to understand him or her better.

One common reality of friendships in all cultural settings is that the closer the friendship, the higher context the communication will be. Close friends, having shared many experiences and enjoying common ways of thinking, have much to draw on when they communicate with one another. One of the ways we demonstrate closeness to another person is to leave out verbal information as a sign that we know she will understand us. Relationships that are not developing higher-context communication are not growing in closeness. We can also show displeasure by lowering the context of our communication, giving too much verbal information as a type of insult or expression of frustration with the other. We return to this discussion on intercultural relationships in chapter 17.

CONTEXTING EMBEDDED IN WORLDVIEW

As we noted in chapter 4, all worldviews have three primary components: the cognitive, the affective, and the evaluative (Hiebert 2008b). In this section we explore each in turn.

Worldview: Cognitive

The *cognitive* component of worldview includes what people know about contexting. They may not even know the term *high context*, but they have learned early in life—by watching parents, siblings, and other relatives as well as friends and other people—that speaking in certain ways or saying

SIDEBAR 9.1

SIXTEEN WAYS THE JAPANESE AVOID SAYING NO

Adapted from Ueda (1974)

In Japan, it is difficult to say "no" simply and directly. A higher value is placed on maintaining the relationship than on clearly expressing one's own feelings. Thus it is often considered best to accept a request, though one does not want to or seems unable to accept. While this is different when people are on intimate terms, outside the family directly declining requests is very difficult. Directly refusing a request may hurt the other person's feelings and may give the impression that one is selfish and unfriendly for declining. For this reason, the Japanese equivalent of "no," *lie*, sounds rather formal and too straightforward to Japanese, and they seem to unconsciously avoid using it. Foreigners wanting to communicate appropriately must develop competence in sending and receiving "no" messages. Particularly important in a hierarchical society like Japan is knowing when and to whom a particular form of "no" is appropriate. The means of refusing requests from employers or superiors will be different from those used for requests from peers.

without words. Or silence can indicate blocked communication between the two, where one does not want to express or cannot find the proper way to express his intention. Silence is sometimes used to decline requests to persons with whom one is not acquainted. However, since silence does not clearly express one's feelings, when used between persons in different positions, a superior can interpret it any way she likes, as a yes or a no.

4. Counterquestions: Sometimes when a person has to answer in the negative, she puts the focus back on the question, such as by saying, "Why do you ask?"
5. Tangential responses: To start talking about a different topic suggests a negative answer. Usually the questioner understands the meaning of this reply to be negative and does not press the issue further, accepting this as a no.
6. Exiting (leaving): Occasionally, the person questioned may simply leave without further explanation or comment.
7. Lying (equivocation or making an excuse—sickness, previous obligation, etc.): If someone wants to refuse with no specific conventional reasons, such as illness, previous obligation, or work, she may lie to make the refusal seem reasonable. Lying sometimes is taken as truth, which might, in some ways, be effective. Sometimes, the lies are more transparent, but they are
1. Vague no: Japanese like to use a vague response. Although the answer is negative, it is felt the listener will not be embarrassed if the speaker uses this "soft expression."
2. Vague and ambiguous yes or no: This is used when a person cannot make up his mind, or to create an atmosphere in which the person is dependent on the listener, who can then decide the answer she likes.
3. Silence: Silence can be used in two senses. First, silence can indicate that two can understand each other

accepted since they are used to spare the hearer's feelings. Research suggests this is the most frequently used form of negation.

8. Criticizing the question itself: Criticizing the question itself, saying it is not worth answering, is used only by someone of superior status to the questioner.
9. Refusing the question: If a person is in an awkward situation, he may say he must refuse to answer and then go away.
10. Conditional no: If someone does not want to accept but is in a "delicate position," she may say that she will be able to do so conditionally. Or she can say she will do her best, but that if she cannot accomplish the task, she hopes that the other person will understand and appreciate her trying. According to research, this method is not favored because it maintains the expectation of the listener.
11. "Yes, but . . .": The person seems to accept the request but then expresses doubts whether he can fulfill it. The use of "but" expresses the real state of mind, which is that he hesitates or fears to accept the request. This is commonly recognized as meaning no.
12. Delaying answers (e.g., "We will write you a letter."): "I'll think about it" is commonly used, and can be taken as a negation or for its literal meaning. Its meaning depends on atmosphere, facial expression, tone of voice, and situation.
13. Internally yes, externally no: If someone really wants to accept but also has something else to do, she will decline without giving a direct no, using an expression of both apology and regret. While the regret may be sincere, the hearer may

merely perceive this as an indirect no and not recognize the speaker's sincere regret.

14. Internally no, externally yes: Even if a person must decline, he sometimes cannot answer directly and may even be forced to accept. This happens when one is asked by a superior. The person asked is pressed to accept but will likely add an excuse as a warning to the listener that he likely will fail to carry out the request.
15. Apology: An apology is often used instead of negative words. The apology can be a very humble response suggesting that the speaker is in an inferior position since she cannot meet the other's expectations. Thus a simple apology can be an effective negative answer.
16. *Lie* (the Japanese equivalent of the English no): This word is primarily used in filling out forms, not in conversation. Japanese speakers avoid using it, as it might disturb the other person immediately on hearing the word before an explanation can be given.

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. People from cultures who prefer direct communication methods often think that indirect communication methods are deceitful. Consider how you would respond to a colleague who asks, "Why don't they just come out and tell the truth?"
2. Brainstorm in small groups and develop a list of situations in low-context societies where it is considered acceptable to be indirect (such as a noncommittal response to a friend's new outfit or silence when a boss proposes a new idea that you have mixed feelings about).

certain things is correct or incorrect. They no longer think about how they communicate, but they do know "correct" communication and "incorrect" communication when they experience it. In sidebar 9.1, we present many of the ways that Japanese learn to say no without actually using the word. They know these options and expect not only to use them themselves but for others to use them as well. They will always read responses from others in terms of these ways of saying no and expect others to read them in the same way.

Worldview: Affective

The *affective* component involves people's emotional attachment and stability in relation to contexting their messages and the impact of raising or lowering the contexting. It is how they feel about contexting as a means of framing communication.

The affective dynamic in a worldview is typically played out in myths and stories found in the culture. As you watch an anime video (a Japanese style of animation; e.g., *Princess Mononoke*) or read a manga graphic novel (a Japanese style of comic book; e.g., Siku 2007), you may note that pieces seem to be missing—information that would help you to understand what is happening. You might also be surprised when things are not stated or are said in the opposite way they are intended.

The proverbs listed in sidebar 9.2 all either indicate a positive expectation toward high contexting or are themselves examples of high-context communication. The Vietnamese, for example, say, "When you eat, check the pots and pans." By that they mean that when you visit someone who prepares a meal for you, you should not speak about your favorite foods before you see what is being cooked, or you may make your host lose face by saying that you do not like the very type of food that is being prepared.

SIDEBAR 9.2

PROVERBS OF HIGH CONTEXT

A wise person is one who hears one word and understands two. (Yiddish)

An elder is like a bathtub. (Akan)

A horse released can be caught, a word released never. (Mongolian)

He who does not understand a look cannot understand long explanations. (North African)

Listen a hundred times; ponder a thousand times; speak once. (Kurdish)

SIDEBAR 9.3

SELECTED WEB RESOURCES ON CONTEXTING

Beyond Intractability article: Communication Tools for Understanding Cultural Differences (http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/communication_tools)

High and Low Context (<http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html>)

"High/Low Context Communication: The Malaysian Malay Style" (<http://www.businesscommunication.org/conventions/Proceedings/2005/PDFs/09ABC05.pdf>)

Kwintessential video: High and Low Context Cultures (<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/intercultural/highcontext-lowcontext-cultures.html>)

Network for Strategic Mission Knowledge Base articles: High/Low Context (<http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&view=b&fto=1776&sf=Y>)

Wikipedia article: High-Context Culture (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_context_culture)

Worldview: Evaluative

The *evaluative* component involves the moral decision-making rules for evaluating actions and attitudes that lead to contexted behavior, such as what are considered appropriate and inappropriate ways to disagree with someone or to engage in conflict. A Chinese student once said that Americans made her say no. When asked to explain, she told the story of being invited to eat dinner at an American's apartment shortly after arriving in the United States to study. The host put food on her plate, and when she had finished it, the host asked if she wanted more, to which she replied, "Yes." So her host gave her more, to her surprise! This was repeated until she was so full she was forced to say no to her host, which she felt would be seen by the host as bad manners. At this stage an American student in class asked her, "But why did you lie?" Both were evaluating the Chinese student's response to her host, but they were using different means of evaluation. The Chinese student had learned early in life not to say no directly to a host. She could communicate that she was full by leaving a little on her plate, and a good host would read that message and not have to ask her directly if she wanted more. The American, however, had learned that when you do not want more, you simply say so. Thus for the American the Chinese student's yes was a lie.

This is just one small example of how we evaluate the contexting behavior of others and how we can incorrectly judge them based on our own frame of reference.

CONCLUSION

For those who have grown up in a higher-context culture, learning how to be direct can feel like learning how to insult people and not feel guilty about it. For those who have grown up in a lower-context culture, learning how to be indirect can feel like learning how to lie. Each will struggle, and each will be tempted to judge the other culture as wrong. Each will have passages from the Bible to justify his or her position and will use them to justify his or her attitudes. Both will need to learn how to listen and how to read each other if they are to get beyond simply imposing on each other their own image of what a Christian should be.

As you read through the case study, see if you can read between the lines and understand what Pastor Yusufu communicates and what John Greenwood understands.

CASE STUDY: WEST AFRICAN CHURCH

DEAN S. GILLILAND

Reprinted with permission from Hiebert and Hiebert (1987, 202–4).

The general council of the Benue Valley Church of Northern Nigeria was in a special session. It was a meeting called by the field secretary of the mission, John Greenwood. The African chairman of the church, Pastor Yusufu Bawo, said before the meeting began, "If the white people call a meeting, it will be *their* meeting, not ours."

For weeks the missionaries had been saying that if relations between the mission and the church did not improve, they would seriously consider returning to their homes in South Africa. Finally, Yusufu Bawo looked directly at the five missionaries present, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "We believe Peter Ewing was right. He said we have been controlled and impoverished by the mission. And we believe, further, that you, Reverend Greenwood, were influenced by your mission board in South Africa to terminate him because he

spoke the truth. Now whether you go or whether you stay makes no difference to us. Do as you please."

The Benue Valley Church. The Benue Valley Church was known as the South African Mission until the missionaries renamed it in 1962. The first missionaries came in 1926 from several denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, and Anglican. Little had been done in medical and educational work due to the high cost factor. As the spirit of nationalism grew in the 1950s and political independence came in the early 1960s, such missions generally began to transfer administration of the churches to African leaders.

The Benue Valley Church felt it lagged behind other denominations in being granted positions of leadership in their church. After forty years of missionary control, in 1966 Pastor Yusufu became the first

The Benue Valley Church felt it lagged behind other denominations in being granted positions of leadership in their church. After forty years of missionary control, in 1966 Pastor Yusufu became the first

African to hold the office of chairman. His first two years, thus far, had been turbulent ones for mission-church relationships. At every meeting where missionaries were present, the same questions were being asked:

"Why are there no funds, even for church buildings?"

"Have you purposely not built us a high school in order to control us?"

"Do you want us to feel shame when we compare ourselves to the other churches around us?"

"Is it not true that even in South Africa, the black man is a mission field for the whites?"

Attitudes toward South African influence. Benue Valley Church was a poor church, even by Nigerian standards. Unlike neighboring churches, Benue Valley had received no subsidies or grants from its home mission board located in South Africa. The missionaries of Benue Valley had taught a strict rule of self-financing for the church from the beginning of its existence. However, while the Methodist and Lutheran missionaries had a comfortable life financially, the white staff at Benue Valley lived almost at poverty level. They and their sponsoring board had nothing to give, except what John Greenwood called "gifts of love and service."

Pastor Yusufu had been calling for a change in mission policies both in administration and finance. He also demanded African autonomy at every level and pressed the missionaries to build a high school and enlarge the medical work. In this he reflected the changing attitude of the Nigerian government, which had recently taken a hard line against all white South Africans. One example was that the prestigious Dutch Reformed Church Mission of South Africa had been evicted

from the country six years before because their mission was regarded as an extension of the apartheid state church. Further, a nationwide daily paper described the D.R.C.M. in headlines as "the mission we do not want."

The arrival of Peter Ewing. The long-standing problems of slow growth in membership, poverty, and mission domination sparked a new crisis when Peter Ewing arrived from Johannesburg. He had been assigned to train the laity for evangelism and to do continuing education for pastors. Though he used as his base the leadership-training school in which he taught during the rainy season, Ewing moved about frequently. He was an impressive person, tall, with a strong physical build. His commanding presence was further strengthened by a gift for the Nigerian language.

Within a month after his arrival, he warned John Greenwood while visiting him in his home that unless a change of attitude and corresponding new programs came from the mission, there was little hope the mission would survive.

John admonished Peter that "to raise false hopes is immoral. We have a long history, which has been built on trust and service. Our board has no funds and we have no funds, and to act as though we do is courting disaster. Moreover, we have always encouraged self-support."

To this Peter replied, "How can you say this to any African, when he has been told over and over again by his own government that white South Africa is the richest nation in the world?"

John answered with obvious impatience. "Be reasonable, Peter. Look who we are. You are a part of us and belong to our history. The leaders of the church, especially Pastor Yusufu, must not be misled by promises that we know we cannot keep."

The termination of Ewing. After two years of service, Peter Ewing returned to Johannesburg for furlough. Almost immediately, the Benue Valley Church was informed by the South African headquarters of the mission that his services had been terminated. Embittered and angry, Peter Ewing's African following believed and circulated the word that John Greenwood and the other missionaries had requested the board to terminate Peter's service in Nigeria. Greenwood denied the charge.

In desperation the missionaries felt their presence may have now become a hindrance to the church. They decided to call together the general council of the church to seek a solution.

"Greenwood's Meeting." As the special council opened, Pastor Yusufu stepped out from behind the chairman's table and stated that this was "Greenwood's meeting." Following several hours of charges and sharp exchanges, John Greenwood

stood to ask his final question: "In the light of all you believe we have said and done, and because our only reason for being here is for the good of the Benue Valley Church, shall we missionaries remain with you or should we leave the country?"

Pastor Yusufu replied that whether the missionaries chose to stay or to return to South Africa was of little interest to him or the church members.

John Greenwood was still standing when Yusufu, motioning with both hands in the direction of his African colleagues, said flatly, "We are waiting now for your decision. Do you go or stay?"

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How would you advise Pastor Yusufu in light of what you have learned in this chapter?
2. What would you suggest to John Greenwood?