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**The Legacy of Eugene A. Nida****A Contribution to Anthropological Theory and Missionary Practice**

R. Daniel Shaw

**Introduction**

“Good missionaries have always been good ‘anthropologists’” (Nida 1954: xi). Missionaries like this opening line of Nida’s book “Customs and Cultures,” which has served as a basal anthropology text for thousands of missionaries around the world for fifty years. But Nida also knew that missionaries were desperately in need of anthropological theory that could work itself out in the reality of their field experience. He went on to point out that he had “become increasingly conscious of the tragic mistakes in cultural orientation . . . of missionary work” – something missionaries do not like to hear. Finally he concluded that opening paragraph by stressing the need for missionaries to take both theory and practice seriously (1954: xi):

Accordingly, this treatment of *Anthropology for Christian Missions* [the subtitle of the book] is directed to those who may have been unaware of the invaluable assistance which the science of anthropology can provide or who have become desirous of knowing more of its implications in various parts of the world.

Ten years later, in his preface to “Toward a Science of Translating,” Nida made the same point (1964: ix):

Increasingly it became obvious that in order to assist translators more satisfactorily it was necessary to provide something which would not only be solidly based on contemporary developments in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, but would also relate the specific area of Bible translating to the wider activity of translating in general.

In other words, Nida understood that scientific theory must be combined with practical application for field-oriented researchers to benefit sufficiently from the theoretical input. Nida had a knack of enabling his recipients to recognize the benefit of anthropology and linguistics.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Nida acknowledged the importance of working across cultures to bring into one context (a specific language and culture) insights from other places and other disciplines. His appreciation of anthropological theory and contributions to grammar<sup>2</sup> expanded the work of Charles Fries and others and eventually led to his major contribution to translation theory as a science of transferring information “from one language to another” (de Waard and Nida 1986). In 1969 Nida again applied this principle of combining theory and practice in his coauthored work with Charles Taber, boldly titling the book “The Theory and Practice of Translation.” In Nida’s experience both were essential in order to treat “the problems of translating primarily in terms of a scientific orientation to linguistic structures, semantic analysis, and information theory,” yet “not lose sight of the fact that translating is far more than a science” (Nida and Taber 1969: vii).

At the end of the colonial era, Nida realized that “good missionaries [needed to be] good anthropologists” to slightly adjust the phrase. He devoted his life to enabling those who sought a missionary vocation to do so more effectively through the application of cultural and linguistic understanding. He encouraged Christian and largely Western non-anthropologists who were monoculturally oriented to become aware of the people around them and

to treat those people with dignity. Thus, Nida used anthropological theory to sensitize an entire generation of missionaries to apply principles of cross-cultural sensitivity to the practice of Christian mission. This new attitude, in turn, has contributed hundreds of cultural descriptions, orthographies, grammars, and translations that have provided unprecedented field data for anthropological analysis that would otherwise be unavailable.

### Nida’s Theoretical Beginnings

Eugene Albert Nida was born in Oklahoma City in 1914 into a medical doctor’s family. He pursued an early interest in languages by taking a major in Greek and a minor in Latin from the University of California at Los Angeles, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1936. Immediately following graduation he headed for Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, where he attended “Camp Wycliffe” for training in linguistics and Bible translation. It was there he first met William Cameron Townsend (founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators) and Kenneth L. Pike (founder of the Summer Institute of Linguistics – SIL). At summer’s end he headed off to northern Mexico to study the Tarahumara language with an eye to eventually translating the Bible into that language. However, due to illness, teaching at SIL every summer from 1937–1953, and study programs (first a M. A. in Greek from the University of Southern California in 1939, and then a Ph. D. in linguistics, under Charles Fries, from the University of Michigan in 1943) he was never able to continue serious research among the Tarahumara (North 1974: vii–ix).

For Nida, 1943 was a banner year; he completed his Ph. D., married Althea Sprague, was ordained as an American Baptist minister and, with Townsend’s encouragement, joined the American Bible Society (ABS). The task at the ABS was to utilize his Greek studies and apply his linguistic training to provide some control over the quality of ABS-sponsored translations. This set a course for Nida that established his interests and set an agenda for the rest of his life. As the Executive Secretary of Translation for the ABS, Nida soon found himself traveling extensively to consult with translators on translation problems resulting from source text issues (drawing on his background in the classics), receptor language concerns (applying his linguistic degrees), or cultural issues of transferring information from one language to another (his lifelong interest in anthropology and translation).

1 Like many anthropologists of his day, Nida viewed anthropology as being multidisciplinary, and his wide interest in language always accounted for the context in which that language made sense. Thus both cultural and linguistic study (along with folklore, acculturation, and applied anthropology) were central to cross-cultural research as he understood it (1954: 25f.).

2 Nida’s book “Morphology” (1946) contributed to a deeper understanding of how the words of a language go together to build a grammar. The linguistic data produced by Nida’s students around the world, contributed both to theories of grammar and the practical effect of describing how a language was structured so that a translation could utilize that structure for more effective communication.

Eric North notes that Nida's dual role in SIL and ABS, as well as his extensive travels "to where the translators were," set a tone for Nida's contributions and mindset: "He quickly began to see his role ... not so much as one of checking the value of the translation before publication ... but rather as one of educating translators to do better translation" (1974: ix). Throughout his fifty-year career with ABS, Nida saw himself as a trainer of translators and from that perspective wrote over forty books and innumerable articles that drew on cultural and linguistic theory to impact fieldwork in over 200 languages across 85 countries. These experiences filled the pages of every book and article Nida wrote, constantly applying some aspect of anthropological or linguistic theory to the solving of a particular problem.<sup>3</sup> In this way, with firsthand experience on every continent, he impacted consultants, translators, and workers in a plurality of cultural contexts.

It was in the early stages of these travels that Nida accumulated what he called "copious field-notes" which he always carried around in his well-traveled briefcase. These everpresent notes enabled him to write "Customs and Cultures" in 1953 when he found himself in Brazil for a conference that had been cancelled. Since he was scheduled for another conference in Brazil six weeks later, he stayed on using the time to write the manuscript (Stine 2004: 98f.). Later in 1953, in concert with other ABS consultants who were constantly assisting translators struggling with cross-cultural issues, Nida founded *Practical Anthropology (PA)*, a journal dedicated to providing "a clearinghouse for the sharing of views among students of anthropology and related sciences who are concerned with anthropology and Christianity, and simultaneously a means by which they may convey relevant information and ideas to others" (Nida 1955). Nida served as the associate editor for the entire history of *PA* and a large percentage of his articles were published either in *PA* or *The Bible Translator (TBT)*, also established by Nida in 1949). Nida championed this cultural focus even though he was primarily a linguist, enabling both North and Stine to classify him as an "anthropological linguist" (North 1974: vii; Stine 2004: 109).

3 Nida's lectures and writing were filled with stories and illustrations from "the field." But every example was grounded in a theoretical construct or issue that could be demonstrated in many different contexts. The response to a lecture or article could easily be, "he just told stories," but when examined, there was a rationale for the stories which emanated from theoretical approaches out of anthropology, linguistics, and translation theory.

## Nida's Contribution to Anthropology

Nida's primary contribution to anthropological linguistics came via communication theory as he developed the concept of "dynamic equivalence." Secondly, Nida enabled missionaries to recognize the importance of anthropology in their own research and this resulted in a wealth of cultural and linguistic data being made available in the mainstream of academic research, thereby greatly enriching the corpus of understanding from which anthropologists can draw.

The concept of dynamic equivalence is at the crux of Nida's translation/communication theory while at the same time serves as his primary contribution to anthropology. Stine (2004: 167) notes:

Nida gave as a basic tenet that a text derives meaning from a culture. For translators this tenet directs them to understand both a source language culture and a target language culture in order to find equivalence in the translation. This conviction assumes a universality of human experience underlying the differing behavioral patterns and values of individual cultures.

Nida's theoretical contribution grew out of the interaction between anthropology and lexicography as applied to translation. The objective was to ensure equivalence in meaning rather than in form. This approach to a people helped to account for their way of understanding the world, which was then demonstrated in the richness of a vocabulary used to communicate their ideas.

Following Sapir, Fries, and others of his time, Nida was aware that there was a dynamic relationship between forms and their meanings. He maintained that "[i]t is not the cultural form but the valuable cultural functions which should be preserved" (1954: 264). At its best, dynamic equivalence contributed to functionalist theory and would have made Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown proud. Functional substitutes were relevant not only to translation but all manner of cultural practice including initiation rights, polygamy, and other marriage practices, the structure of a church-building, respect for the ancestors, and people's "artistic and esthetic tastes" (1954: 259). Nor was dynamic equivalence to be utilized as a preservation of "symbols of bygone days." Rather, it could be employed to demonstrate an attitude of worth and recognition for skills that dare not be lost to present-day technology: "the converted idol carver need not throw away his skill when it can be usefully employed in beautifying the church, the school, and the home with esthetically meaningful renditions of new themes in old styles" (1954: 263).

Nida's conception of dynamic equivalence also demonstrated the importance of culture change and the struggles of people in the postcolonial era who were connecting with a world vastly different from their own while holding fast to the values of their language and culture. Nida maintained that "[i]f cultures are to be changed effectively without boomeranging dislocations, functional substitutes are essential" (1954: 247). It was avoiding those dislocations to culture that drove Nida to the development of a sophisticated theory of dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964; Nida and Taber 1969).

One of his greatest delights was discovering a cultural equivalent in the contemporary context for a biblical situation. The net effect was biblical text that came alive and was understandable because people were able to make relevant some issue of biblical import (Stine 2004: 168). As Nida (1954: 262) put it:

The most successful anthropological and missionary methods of approach to non-Christian peoples have resulted not from theoretical formulations . . . but from on-the-spot dealing with the complex, living situations. Anthropology may point out the nature of the problems and the possibilities of various solutions, but only the man at grips with the human factors involved can be expected to be successful in finding an adequate solution.

Nida was a frequent lecturer at universities and colleges around the world, though he never held an academic post. His favorite classroom was not the lecture hall but the translation desk – consulting with translators over a particular problem that often had its roots in a cultural issue such as biblical key terms, or discovering a cultural insight that reflected back on anthropological or linguistic theory, which benefited from his wide scope of field experience. And this input of both theory and practice often resulted in the publication of linguistic and cultural articles that gave the scientific world new insights based on data that was not otherwise available. Sometimes Nida wrote the article himself (1958), other times he coauthored articles (Wonderly and Nida 1963), but more often he encouraged translators to present cultural data as the solution to a translation problem (Van der Jagt 1990), always with Nida's assistance acknowledged. Such vignettes have contributed to the richness of cultural awareness of and for societies around the world.

Nida's mentoring eventually paid off as translators and consultants who developed a greater interest in cultural studies, took higher degrees and contributed to an expanding literature that provided anthropology with a wealth of cultural data that

would not have been available otherwise.<sup>4</sup> My own experience of going to the Island of New Guinea to work among the Samo was, in part, encouraged by Nida. My subsequent research and the writing of two ethnographies on the Samo (Shaw 1990, 1996) were a product of a desire to fill what a special issue of *Current Anthropology* called cultural "black holes" (Reining 1967). Research that has contributed to the success of the "Ethnologue" (Gordon 2005) has greatly enriched anthropological awareness of peoples around the world as well as research needs. In part, this research is a product of Nida's influence. It has resulted in the publication of materials on societies that would otherwise not be known as they are today.

Furthermore, Nida recognized that anthropologists and missionaries have different agendas. While anthropologists may not themselves subscribe to the religious motivation of missionaries, they can appreciate the result: reduced dislocations. As Nida so nicely expressed it, "The principal value of anthropology is to change ourselves, not to remake others" (1988: 64). Life is meaningful for others because they can knowingly preserve their culture on the one hand and make adjustments to incorporate encroaching cultures, including the impact of the Bible, on the other. This was Nida's answer to hegemonic accusations against missionaries and he sought to educate missionaries in order to ensure that local people benefited. By reducing the mistakes of missionaries the people benefit by applying the Bible to issues they consider important rather than to issues outsiders bring to their attention.

This was nowhere more evident than in Nida's approach to key theological terms, and particularly the use of terms for spiritual beings such as the devil, demons, angels and, of course, God. "Customs and Cultures" is full of examples of the results of such struggles to find just the right term that would ensure the people receiving the translation would clearly understand the message and be able to relate it to their lives. It was essential that Hebrew or Greek terms (or worse, English or European terms) not be simply transliterated, but

4 The list of culturally oriented theses and dissertations written by missionaries is far too long for inclusion here. A review of the SIL Web site bibliography alone will produce a long list, as will browsing the pages of the "Ethnologue" (Gordon 2005). There is a growing list of missionaries who have based their dissertations on material collected, in part, in the context of doing mission. Such was the case of my own dissertation (Shaw 1976), as well as Thomas Headland (1986), Michael Rynkiewicz (1972), and Robert Priest (1993), to list a few.

be “translated” for maximum understanding. So, for example, when pastors from other parts of New Guinea told the Samo about *Godi*<sup>5</sup> it made no sense to them. However, when they discovered that God was like the old man of a longhouse, the *ayo*, who was concerned for their welfare and protected them it made much more sense. When combined with an all-inclusive personal pronoun, *oye*, it became “Everyone’s Authority Person” – God (Shaw and Van Engen 2003: 177). Relevant renditions of angels as “messengers from God,” prophets as “storytellers” or “spokespersons for God,” and apostles as those who are “sent” or “commissioned” for a purpose, exemplify Nida’s approach in his search for ensuring meaningful communication as well as dynamic equivalence (Stine 2004: 47).

By using indigenous terms for God as the supreme being, people more clearly understand themselves as people with a culture and a dignity that enabled them to reflect on God who is already in their midst, a point made clear by the West African historian Lamin Sanneh (1989). Stine (2004: 17) makes the point nicely:

Had missionaries not translated the Bible, they might have retained their position as the experts in the new religion. But by emphasizing that the Bible had to be translated into the language of the people, the missionaries gave the new churches the power to develop their own understanding of Christianity. It made Christianity indigenous, not foreign. And by natural extension, it led to questioning all forms of foreign domination, whether cultural, political, or religious.

Both the receptors and individual missionaries are better for such input, and anthropologists can feel more comfortable with the results. Whiteman makes a similar point: missionaries “discover, from the inside, how Christ is the answer to the questions [people] ask, and to the needs that they feel” (2004: 85). And anthropology (as a discipline) benefits because the issues come from the people, from the particularity of their context, rather than from a cross-cultural worker’s external and more universal perspective. Indeed, as Sanneh has noted, missionaries and their translation efforts have stimulated an indigenous literature and renewed interest in peoples’ own cultural heritage as well as their language. As a result, the input of Christian cross-cultural workers has enabled people to

avoid the negative effects of becoming Western, and renewed a sense of pride in their own identity (Sanneh 1989: 334). Certainly missionaries, so sensitized, have benefited anthropology and demonstrate the value of Nida’s approach to the theory and practice of dynamic equivalence and his devotion to ensuring that Christian workers understand the value of anthropological awareness in the context of their work. This approach has resulted in a wealth of cultural data collected by translators and made available to anthropologists in the academic domain. Nida’s own prolific writing included cultural and linguistic examples from around the globe thus benefiting professional anthropologists and untrained missionaries alike.

### Nida’s Approach

Nida was, in reality, a product of and contributed to mid-20th-century cultural and linguistic theory. This established his approach to writing as a means to assist field-oriented practitioners in both translation and concomitant cultural studies necessary to be effective communicators. Functional anthropology (both theoretically and practically) had demonstrated that it worked, and Nida organized “Customs and Cultures” to maximize what worked. He assumed that language and culture are interrelated, that they were, in fact, two of the crucial branches of anthropology that in tandem reflected the way human beings behaved and talked about their behavior. He assumed that the “meanings of words reflect the culture” (Nida 1954: 210).

For Nida the value of cultural and linguistic research was of much greater benefit to those who were in a learner position as outsiders, but insiders always benefited because of the outsiders’ new awareness. He noted that there “is much which we have learned from so-called primitive peoples, and there is still much we could learn” (Nida 1954: 11).<sup>6</sup> This is a message Nida worked hard to communicate. He first looked at a people’s culture and then at how cultural issues could be related to biblical principles. Christianity must never be equated with Western culture.

<sup>5</sup> The Samo language has no closed syllables, so these pastors simply added a final “i” to the English word “God.” This, of course, made no sense to the Samo and so they paid little or no attention to this created word.

<sup>6</sup> Nida and others of his ilk in the mid-20th century can be forgiven for using language common for their day. It is not for us to denigrate the use of words and miss the contribution. We must take note of the value of Nida’s work in assisting missionaries and others as they sought to build relationships with people and focus, not on separation and differences, but on interaction with the people.

The only absolute in Christianity is the triune God. Anything which involves man, who is finite and limited, must of necessity be limited, and hence relative. Biblical cultural relativism is an obligatory feature of our incarnational religion, for without it we would either absolutize human institutions or relativize God (Nida 1954: 282, note 22)

Clearly for Nida, God was not an American! He warned missionaries that they would experience culture shock and demonstrated through many illustrations the need to put aside one's monocultural perspective and assume an attitude of cultural relativity. And he found support in anthropology! It is surprising how contemporary Nida was despite the mid-20th-century date of "Customs." He addressed rising divorce rates, increasing homosexuality, all manners of marriage patterns, and topics where other societies take issue with Western cultural expectations (youth valued in contrast to age, lack of respect for authority, focus on fashion and beauty – always in the eye of the beholder – and materialism in contrast to relationships) all in stride. He maintained that a moral order is highly valued in all societies and encouraged cross-cultural researchers to set aside personal biases and attempt to understand local values and their interface with spiritual values as reflected in God's perspective from Scripture (1954: 250 ff.).

Citing Redfield, he posited what he called "Biblical relativism": "a recognition of the different cultural factors which influence standards and actions" (Nida 1954: 52). For Nida, God set the "standards" which he maintained were laid out in the Bible – hence the need to translate and make God understandable to all people. Given Nida's agenda, it is interesting how little Bible thumping he did. Rather he takes a strong anthropological perspective and castigates missionaries for not using the tools available to them – the rationale for writing his treatise on culture. However, on the cultural relativity issue, the wide variety of people processing those standards resulted in a myriad of "actions," all of which reflect on anthropological insights from which missionaries could draw and thereby gain new appreciation for the ingenuity of each society and reinforce the need for dynamic equivalence in communicating with people in that context.

The symbiosis between anthropology and Christian mission characterized an important attitude that permeated much of Nida's writing – interaction between theory and practice, between the theoretician and the practitioner, was essential. Nida's approach to anthropology, then, was to "translate" information into language outsiders had learned, and

thereby enable missionaries to be more effective and avoid the mistakes so often raised and joked about by anthropologists.

It was not Nida's intention to just be a theoretician, on the contrary, if there was little or no practical value to a theoretical position, it did not find its way into his writing, lecturing, or consulting. From his social science background, Nida understood that at the heart of effective communication was a communicator: a person who appreciated the value of local culture, social structures, and political systems as well as religious beliefs and values, and used that understanding to enable local people to utilize the relevance of this information in their approach to experience introduced from outside (including the Bible). Theory and practice interacted with each other and enabled new understanding of dynamic/functional equivalence in the anthropological community and an appreciation for communication that could be viewed as useful by those in the indigenous communities. Nida's approach produced an attitude in those who fell under his teaching and writing<sup>7</sup> that went far beyond what anthropologists by themselves could have accomplished. Tom Headland notes:

Personally, from my view, Nida's great contribution to anthropology was that he turned students and missionaries on to anthropology. He did this to missionary candidates in the protestant tradition just as Luzbetak did to missionary candidates in the Catholic tradition. When I read Nida's "Customs and Cultures" book in 1958, I was hooked! I switched my major to anthropology in a heartbeat. Many of us who did this, not only got B.A.s in anthropology, but went on and did doctoral work in anthropology and made significant contributions to theory and/or practice in secular anthropology (personal communication November, 2005).

### Nida's Legacy

Nida's legacy is made up of innumerable missionaries who, using mid-20th-century anthropological theory, went forth both sensitized to the mistakes of their predecessors and equipped with tools to build better bridges of understanding. At the same time it includes people, in hundreds of societies around the world, who have benefited from more sensitive missionaries and can consequently appreciate

<sup>7</sup> Authors writing books and articles on culture, translation, and related topics regularly cite Nida and build on his theoretical contributions. A recent article on the translation of Chinese fiction provides a case in point (Hu 2000).

the biblical message in a new and meaningful way – their way. Thus outsiders, sensitized to cultural issues and insiders relating outside perspectives to their own context together formed a new audience and together shaped the legacy of Eugene A. Nida. The result has been greater cultural awareness as well as more effective translation. Many missionaries have recognized how much they can learn from those they assumed knew so little (especially about the Bible and the cultural issues faced by the people in its pages). In the process, anthropology has also benefited, for missionaries make fewer of the mistakes anthropologists work hard to avoid.

Nida had the ability to relate his theories to anthropologists and apply the anthropological issues to missionaries. In the post-World War II context, field practitioners were struggling with how to connect with people, and Nida identified both with the missionary concerns and the issues of the people, bringing them face to face with each other for the benefit of both. Again, theory served a practical purpose and literally thousands of missionaries benefited. An example comes from Norman Allison (2004: endnote 4):

In 1957 when I entered Toccoa Falls College to prepare for missionary service, I had never so much as thought of culture or anthropology as a part of that process. There was no major in missiology then, but I did take the few “missions” courses offered to those who would be missionaries. One of these required courses was Cultural Anthropology, and our textbook was *Customs and Cultures*, by Eugene Nida. Through this new understanding in the minds of missionary candidates like myself, later to be a field missionary, and then a professional anthropologist, cultural anthropology was evolving as a significant segment of the science of missiology.

This treatment of anthropology for the good of translation and the missionary enterprise went a long way toward developing mission into a “science,” and in 1973, the American Society for Missiology was formed. Nida assisted in formally transitioning *PA* into the Journal *Missiology* as a means of recognizing the developing new discipline as a research field in its own right. Nida’s approach to anthropology and its relevance for solving mission-related problems was thus formalized into a multidisciplinary approach designed to assist both the messenger and those who received the message. Nida knew that “it is not primarily the message but the messenger of Christianity that provides the greatest problems for the average non-Christian” (Nida 1954: 251) and he desperately worked to avoid the ugly implications. Nida thus contributed a lifelong interest in the development of theory and

practice for effective communication to anthropologists and missionaries alike.

Alas the task continues as a new generation of Western and non-Western missionaries and other cross-cultural workers, desire to impact the world beyond themselves. Uninformed by anthropological insights, they rush into their task without cross-cultural understanding, and “miss the richness of other cultures” (Whiteman 2004: 85). We must, then, take note of the current world situation with its concomitant pluralism and rampant globalization and continue what Nida so gallantly accomplished for the previous generation. Today, a growing band of Christian anthropologists is bursting on the scene and would do well to follow Nida’s lead. It is incumbent on them to continue his legacy by researching, writing, and teaching anthropological principles that impact cross-cultural practice in the field and, in turn, contribute back to anthropology, new theoretical perspectives that have a further effect on cultural anthropology. Thanks to Nida, both missionaries and anthropologists appreciate the value of culture and language study and take them seriously.

As we reflect on Nida’s legacy in an age of postmodern influence and rapid socioeconomic and political change, we must take Nida’s contribution beyond doing mission and seek ways to ensure that the host of other expatriates wandering the globe (including military personnel, relief and development workers, and the myriad agents in so-called nongovernmental organizations) are sensitized to adapt to people and encouraged to accommodate their outside behavior patterns to the expectations of their hosts. By so doing, outsiders will be able to encourage people in “receptor cultures” to maximize their own cultural traditions and concerns. By so doing, the cultural heritage of a people will be preserved and their dignity left intact.

Furthermore, current anthropological theory and methodological approaches (Barrett 1996) can be incorporated into cross-cultural practice. As the world changes, anthropology, as a discipline, is adjusting. Theory, with the incorporation of cognitive studies (D’Andrade 1995) and other contemporary developments, has come a long way since 1954. As Nida demonstrated how the issues of the mid-20th century impacted anthropological theory and the way to do mission, so today we must apply anthropological approaches when addressing contemporary cross-cultural issues such as ethnic cleansing, refugees and immigrants, child soldiers, homelessness, globalization, urbanization, the AIDS pandemic, religious fundamentalism, and many other local and global phenomena. And how does cultural

insight affect the way mission as well as other expatriate influences impact relationships people develop with those they seek to assist? Nida addressed these issues, so must we who continue his legacy. Utilizing anthropology to reduce hegemony and ensure culturally sensitive and effective cross-cultural interaction is no less important today than it was when Nida first published "Customs and Cultures"; Nida would expect nothing less of those who follow in his footsteps. We must ensure that Nida's theoretical and practical approach to anthropology and mission continue to enable more effective missional and cross-cultural practice – whatever forms that may take.

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