

## *Suggestions for Cross-Cultural Mentoring*

The challenge of cross-cultural mentoring begins with the very perception of the task. “Mentoring” is perceived differently in different cultures. Even a definition of mentoring will vary cross-culturally. The following suggestions will help those who are working in a cross-cultural setting:

- The challenge of cross-cultural mentoring goes beyond language differences to the way the mentor and student “see” the world. Culture offers a set of eye glasses by which to see and understand life. These differences need to be openly acknowledged and discussed in the mentoring relationship.
- Effective cross-cultural mentoring demands that the mentor has come to a significant degree of self-awareness regarding his or her cultural setting. What values guide the mentor? What assumptions about the world are taken for granted?
- Effective mentoring demands that a mentor seeks information about the culture of the student—and the student seeks information about the culture of the mentor. What are the key cultural accomplishments? The religious systems? The family structure? The social mores?
- Cross-cultural mentoring demands a serious commitment to active listening—that is, a commitment to test out what is ‘heard’ so that the mentor and student are truly ‘listening’ to each other.