

A QUIET DAY OFF

For cross-cultural missionaries, living in another culture and in a community where everyone watches you is tiring. A day off is of great value. This drama highlights the pressures of life as well as the need to know local cultural values.

Participants: A missionary family – Mum, Dad and two or three kids. Plus various other people who come up to them as listed below.

Set the scene: Place three chairs close together in a row, then three chairs immediately behind them (representing the seats in the cabin of a dual-cab Ute). Behind the chair, have a space around the size of the tray of a dual-cab.

The action:

1. **One member of the family says**, “It is so good to get a day off for some time out and some personal shopping”.
 2. **The family** makes a start at getting into the car, Mum and Dad in the front, kids in the back seats within the cab. But before they can actually get in, various people come up:
 3. **Two other missionaries** come rushing over – “Please buy us 5 cartons of eggs” (and then because shops sell eggs in plastic bags, there is much rushing around to get cartons); “Please buy us 2 kg of steak, 2 kg of mince and some sausages” (need a coolbox, as it is a long, hot trip, and there is discussion about how many sausages, what sort of steak, etc)
 4. **A language helper/friend** rushes up “Please buy me some shoes – you know, ones like those Mary brought back the other day.” Discussion to clarify which shoes, how much she is prepared to pay, etc.
 5. **The headmaster** of the local school, “Please take me to town. I need to collect the teachers’ wages and we are a week late.” As he gets into the car, his wife and kids start to get in as well.
 6. **A worker from the nearby clinic:** “Please, we need to get this lady to town. She has a problem with her pregnancy. Please take her.” She proves to have a large bundle of stuff with her, plus her husband and a toddler.
 7. **One of the Bible translation team:** “Please take me. I need to buy a uniform for my child, or he won’t be able to start school next week.”
 8. **The village headman**, a very dignified and stately man, “I need to get to town.” No explanation given.
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9. **The village headman's mother-in-law** arrives with him and says, "I need to go to my cousin's funeral." (This is getting tricky, because culturally she and the headman, as in-laws, can't sit together).
10. **A respected friend and senior pastor:** "I need to go to town to get some medicine for my wife." As he gets in, the wife shows up and starts getting in, together with two of her teenage children.
11. Just as the car is about to go, **a group of six or seven people** rush over, "The bus has broken down. We need a lift!" Each of them has a big bundle of corn or sweet potato they are taking to town for sale.

The discussion

1. How did the "missionaries" decide who would sit where in the car? (e.g., will the missionaries kids sit in the tray of the Ute? Where will the senior pastor and headmaster sit? How do you get around the problem of the headman and mother-in-law not sitting together? What about the pregnant woman?
2. What were the important cultural priorities that became obvious and are they all that important to the missionary family?
3. How did the missionary couple feel about their "day off"?

