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| **How to make Americans & Canadians & others feel home in our churches?** What do you think? ============================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Mina | |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   You make Americans feel at home while they are at home by having the priest speak English, because if they can’t understand what the priest is saying then they will get nothing at out of it because they understand what he is saying. The priest should also speak Arabic for other people. When I bring my American friend to church , he asks me what the priest is talking about in the sermon and I have to tell him , that I don't really know because I don't know a lot of Arabic and just know conversional Arabic . My American friend loves the church and the Liturgy but does not understand when the priest is talking Arabic during the sermon.  Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! (1 Chronicles 16:34)  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif========================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Ashley | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |   Hello,      Well I'm American myself and I'm also an Orthodox Christian. My husband is Egyptian that is how I came to learn about the church. But from personal experience, the language I would say is the #1 thing. Obviously we need to have Arabic because some Egyptians don't speak good English or not at all. But we need to have more church's that have a main percentage of English spoken. Also in my church, I have noticed on a certain wall everyone posts things like ads or church trips, gatherings etc. But all of them are in Arabic. Also I have been wanting to do extra things inside the church to be able to meet people, but I’m not sure how. So the wall with all the postings would be a great place to post things up about that. Also I thought that having certain people be assigned to look out for Americans or Canadians and introduce themselves and ask to sit with them and help explain and teach things to them so they can learn everything. Because when I first started going nobody would talk to me period. I felt very uncomfortable. I hope I answered correctly. Really, that’s all I can think of at the moment.  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gifhttps://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif========================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | KEITH | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   I'm an Englishman, who attends a Coptic Church in England.    I've been Orthodox for about three years, whilst previously I was an evangelical for forty years.  But sadly, even after three years, I still feel like an outsider.  This is a new experience for me, because my previous church was multi-national.  And yet everyone, regardless of race or color, felt at home.  First and foremost, we were Christians, and nationality was totally unimportant.  Furthermore, within the congregation are Muslim, Sikh and Hindu converts, and all are made to feel welcome.  Moreover, this fulfills our Lord's "great commission,” to go into the world and preach the "good news" of salvation to everyone, regardless of nationality.    Finally, I believe that we must all pray for the Church, because it will take great wisdom to implement any changes, which may need to be made.     ==============================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Anthony | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   I Was just baptized into the Coptic Church Sunday (YAY) and I get this question all the time and I do not agree in whole with the two prior statements...   English, during the sermon/conversation, I think should be there, I will agree with that but in the liturgy or the hymns where I have noticed most Coptic/some Arabic used is not extremely pressing in my experience, and this seems to be a goal. Many of the youth in my church are pushing for all English and that is evidence enough to know that in time this will happen I think a more urgent need is teaching on Orthodoxy 101 or catechesis of some sort... It’s no stretch to say most inquirers are going to be protestants and the second they see the similarities to the RCC they will be turned off... so as far as mission is concerned I think teaching proper presentation and giving an understanding of the traditions and practices are the most pressing things... I have talked to even Orthodox who do not know why women wear head coverings and didn’t know it was in the bible they thought it was cultural and should be removed!   As far as feeling welcomed? Getting the older generations to relax a bit and just loving on a person...  One example, a Catholic girl who comes to your bible studies was scolded by an older lady at our church for crossing her legs, it was her second time at the liturgy, and I’m certain this lady didn’t even know her name... to me that is unacceptable  You don’t need to be able to understand what’s going on to appreciate the beauty in it and many if not all churches have an English liturgy nearby... I think an inclusive atmosphere is really the most welcoming factor universally inviting them to a meal after church or to your house or to the various events... the person I have connected to the most at this church is a girl who regardless of where we are or what’s going on just asks my opinion (she is fascinated with converts loll) My church specifically has a good bit of English and the gospels are read once in English once in Arabic so I may be at a disconnect with the other posters who seem to have more Arabic...  ====================================================  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Nadaleane | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   Hi Victor,  I totally agree with Ashley, I am married to an American and I have the same problem (my husband being ignored) and for this reason, my husband doesn't come to my church.  People in the church socialize with each and hardly say one word to my husband, I know they don't speak good English and they avoid talking to him or befriended him or any other non-Arabic speaking which is a big mistake. Even if we don't speak the language well, we need to show we care and respect everyone come to the church and give them full attention. My husband appreciates if they even try to speak English.  If we were, more kind and give total attention to every guest comes to our church that will make a big difference.   Be blessed, Nadine   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Patrick | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   I attended St. Mary & Archangel Coptic Orthodox Church in Oviedo for almost two years.  While I found the Egyptian people to be warm, loving and very welcoming to us, I ultimately could never feel like I "fit-in.”  This is no one's fault but just the cultural differences that separated us.    The language was the biggest barrier and then the monophonic male only chanting as opposed to the polyphonic male/female mix that the Western ear is used too.    I also found it a little discomforting to always be referred to as a "convert.”  A "convert" means "one who converted" and since all people need to be converted, we are ALL converts (even the Copts themselves).  All of us have to be converted from the Kingdom of Darkness and into the Kingdom of Light through baptism just as the Lord commanded, so all of us are converts.  Again, this always made me feel a little like I was always an "outsider" or a little less-than the others (who, apparently, were not "converts" but natural-born into the Kingdom of God?)    All the Orthodox Churches seem to be very ethno-centric (or oriented around their ethnicity).  This seems to be the case whether Serbian, Greek, Russian, Coptic, Indian, etc... This, I believe, is where the Orthodox Church fails vary greatly.  The great commission was about spreading the Kingdom of God, not a certain ethnic race's cultural values.  Each Orthodox Church should go into a country and quickly establish an autonomous Church in the language, culture, and ethos of the native peoples; this is what the Apostles did.  St. Mark allowed the Egyptians to continue to speak their native language and even used their pagan Photonic tunes for the liturgical songs; St. Paul allowed the Greeks the same thing. But what do the Orthodox Churches do now?  They move into a country and tell the native people that, to become Orthodox, they must learn a new ethnic culture, language, and way of life - this is a thing the Apostles did not do.    I never wanted to cease being an American.  America has many flaws and much sin but, nevertheless, it is the country God chooses me to be born in; to be light and salt in it.  I like the English language.  I like singing in melodies tunes with both male and female voices...I like being an American and am not ashamed of that - but I also want to be an Orthodox Christian who follows the ancient way.    The Orthodox Churches need to follow the precedent set by the Apostles and expand the Kingdom and not their own power base around the world.  If orthodoxy is to grow, it MUST be given to the people in their own language, culture, music, beauty, and ethos - period.    I commend the Coptic Church because they are the only ones (along with the Antiochian Orthodox Church) who are struggling to reach people with the Kingdom.  The beauty of its people, liturgy, and zeal is to be commended.  The only thing people are asking for, however, is to allow them to have this beauty too - but in their own culture - give us Christ and not a culture (as beautiful as it may be).    May God's blessing always be with you,  Patrick  ==================================================     |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Anthony | |  |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |   I have never heard the Church say you must learn their language and most bishops are pushing for English focus in America...  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif =====================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Tasoni Demiana | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |   Throughout the years, I have observed whether in other Faith churches, business, and/or educational settings, that culture plays an important part in setting the environment.  In the philosophy and sociology of educational education, it plays such an important part, that it is the LAW, that the schools and teachers must adhere to multicultural guidelines to ensure that children from all nations are  surrounded with their culture, together with their new culture, in order to make them feel accepted and respected.  America and Canada are/were known to be great melting pots of different cultures blending together to almost make one "undefined" culture...Keeping one's own roots and cultural traditions, while also embracing, respecting and understanding  the cultures around us.   I strongly believe in maintaining the beautiful Holy Orthodox Traditions within the church, outside of the theology and Holy traditions, of the church are the social and hospitality aspects, which must be worked upon.  This is the same for one's place of work and school. Language can be an isolating factor; this happens within any language culture that the people will speak in their native mother tongue, no matter how fluent they are in the language of acquisition.  This can be a sensitive issue if you have people of other cultural backgrounds come into the church and at one point everyone is  standing around speaking one language, then the majority of the group, instantly begins speaking a language that the 'minority' do not understand.  Other non-Christian faiths, and corporations study the culture of the environment and then work on promoting the diffusion of culture.  Imperialism of culture happens within many of our churches without the regard for the other.  One can take an analogy of a Chinese Buffet Restaurant.... The decor. music, art, and people, gives an ambiance of CHINESE, however at the buffet tables, one can find a conglomerate of different cuisines from around the world.  This is a diffusion of culture...  Perhaps, it would be a good idea to establish a committee who would be in charge of hospitality.  From people at the doors, who would greet all people according to their language and culture? Then this same committee would be responsible to ensure the  inter-mingling of the minority within the majority. Just because one sees that everyone loves... "The food,”   acceptance and security goes beyond this factor. The minority culture should be nurtured on a continual basis, using people within the community.  There are also many people within the church who, after a certain age, are not utilized, and hence they feel 'useless" One can target this forgotten population, and create a cross-cultural and cross-age committee who would work on the Hospitality of the minority who come into our churches.   This is not only a factor within the Orthodox church, but within all churches. The minority culture would then become a part of the majority culture in welcoming the others who come in, together with the majority culture.   America and Canada are very diverse and have many cultures within, and we must study this and work on it, on a consistent basis.  We must tear down the walls of cultural imperialism and work on embracing all cultures WITHOUT FEAR....    With Faith, Hope and Joy in the Lord His most unworthy servant and yours, *Tasoni  Demiana St. John the Beloved*   =======================================================  **Nadaleane**  Hi Victor,  I totally agree with Ashley, I am married to an American and I have the same problem (my husband being ignored) and for this reason, my husband doesn't come to my church.  People in the church socialize with each and hardly say one word to my husband, I know they don't speak good English and they avoid talking to him or befriended him or any other non-Arabic speaking which is a big mistake. Even if we don't speak the language well, we need to show we care and respect everyone come to the church and give them full attention. My husband appreciates if they even try to speak English.  If we were more kind and give total attention to every guest comes to our church that will make a big difference.   Be blessed, Nadine Wassman   ==========================================================   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | -sandy | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif |  | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | |  | | |   wooow this is soooo true! it’s amazing! I totallllly agreee!  ====================================================https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif  https://ssl.gstatic.com/ui/v1/icons/mail/profile_mask2.png   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Mike | |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif | | | |   Hi Tasoni Demiana,    I like your write-up below.  You capture everything very well.  However, one thing we must be careful of is highlighting or singling out the "foreigners.”  As Egyptians, we tend to overdo it sometimes when we try to be hospitable.  My wife is one of those "foreigners" (Korean) and I have two adult children that are halters.  Only by the Grace of God and my wife's patience have we remained with the Coptic Orthodox church for all these years.  God known’s we've had our trials.  Anyway, one thing that bothers her is when she is singled out (good or bad).  Being over hospitable or giving special privileges to an individual just because he/she is not Egyptian actually highlights that they are different and don't belong here.  We must learn as a group to treat everyone as part of our extended family, always speaking in the language of the land, whether the non-Egyptians are there or not.  If we all are forced to speak English any time a non-Egyptian comes in the room, we are making it painfully obvious to this individual that they are different, but we are willing to "sacrifice" for his/her sake.  In other words, "if you weren't here, we would be speaking our own language, but we will give up our comfort for you.”  While it is a commendable effort, we must be aware of this fact.  Change must start before anyone different comes through the door and we must sustain it throughout.    God Bless,  Mike https://mail.google.com/mail/images/cleardot.gif |  |  |