The Bottomless Pit

Millions of Americans listened in when our president gave a speech Sunday opening the September 11 anniversary of the event. Millions of Americans listened in when our president gave a speech Sunday opening the September 11 anniversary of the event. Millions of Americans listened in when our president gave a speech Sunday opening the September 11 anniversary of the event.

While many Americans, including myself, have gotten the impression that the money is mostly for reconstruction in Iraq, only $21 billion or about 24 percent is designated for reconstruction at all, and even that will be apportioned between Iraq and Afghanistan. Even if the bulk of the reconstruction money does go to Iraq, at least 76 percent of this “reconstruction money” will be for military actions.

Perhaps more importantly, though, Bush mentioned the war in Iraq and the actions continuing in Afghanistan as part of the larger “war on terror” in response to the attacks two years ago. It was my understanding that there hadn’t been any connection shown between the September 11 attack and Iraq. These facts, though, are easily overlooked as we see the images of planes crashing into our twin towers on the two year anniversary of the event.

So, does it make any difference if our president calls Iraq part of the “war on terror”? Since congress granted Bush broad powers to do what needs to be done to stop terrorists for the long run, it does indeed make a difference. If we thought fighting communism was a never-ending battle, we better not hope for an end anytime soon to our “war on terror,” especially when wars about oil and elusive WMDs can so quickly become about terrorism.

We’ve been sending troops to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Phillipines. Now what? Can we sleep better at night? Maybe not, but at least we can console ourselves knowing that no matter how large the national deficit gets, there is always enough money for the military.

~ mjs

Cross-Culturals: Worth the Trip

By Shannon Yoder
Columnist

I have not been a student at EMU for long, so I do not know how most students feel towards cross-cultural. To some, the trip may just be another requirement needed to graduate. Others, perhaps, eagerly await the experience. In my opinion, cross-culturals provide each student with the most valuable learning they will ever receive at EMU. I say this because I have lived in another culture for a year. That year changed my life drastically. EMU’s cross cultural program will provide each student with a learning experience unlike any other.

Living and working in another culture is one of the smartest things anyone can ever do. It teaches students in many ways. The first is global education. The country you choose to visit will be rich in history and culture. If a student is willing to learn, there is an endless amount of global knowledge at their disposal. Physical aspects, such as clothes and food, can also provide you with insight into the foreign culture. When you form relationships with people of a different country, you learn about their beliefs and values. By incorporating those with the physical aspects, you get the whole picture of the culture. By the time you come home, you feel as if you were an expert on the culture of the nation you visited. You will then be more open to global learning back in America.

Also, I assure you that you will question many of the norms of American society and look at the U.S. in a whole new light. Things that have become second nature to Americans are challenged by a new and different way of life. Americans are some of the most stubborn people, in that they think their way of doing things is always the right way or the only way. I suggest that while you are on your cross-cultural, you open your mind and challenge many of your previous assumptions about life. When you return, I am sure you will wonder why Americans do some things the way they do. Yet, with your new knowledge and curiosity, you can only improve society with the questions you raise.

Finally, cross-culturals provide students with one of the most intensely spiritual journeys they will ever take. The first thing you will be asked by people you meet is “What are you doing here?” Your answer will involve EMU and how you need this experience as credit to graduate. You will then be questioned about the Mennonite faith and its core beliefs, as well your own personal beliefs. This will be a perfect time to introduce others to Christ, as well as a time to grow closer to Him yourself. All this makes your cross-cultural experience a perfect time to grow and learn about your faith, as well as your personal relationship with God.

Cross-culturals gives students knowledge that they will never learn in a classroom from a professor. Learning about a foreign culture, the U.S., and spirituality are best done overseas. This will be the best time of your college career, so I suggest that you try to go for as long as you can. In one way or another, your life will be changed forever by the unique experience cross-culturals can give you.

Shannon Yoder may be reached at shannon.yoder@emu.edu

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Phone: (540) 432-4334 Fax: (540) 432-4130
http://weathervane.emu.edu email: wsunae@emu.edu