

Is There a Cultural Key in Evangelism?

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But if you ask the question what is the response in that culture to the Gospel, and what you mean is - a lot of times, people would ask it kind of like this: how do we reach that culture? Or what's the key to that culture? This is a question that's really common. I don't know if any of you would ask it or not, but we get it all the time over there from other churches, other missionaries, or maybe even in the U.S. from people outside our circles, searching for a cultural key; searching for a secret to win India to Christ. But that's not the way it works. And I really fear that a lot of people are getting off track in this way.

Let me just share a verse with you. "But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or cleverness or to tamper with God's Word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."

So what does this verse say? Here Paul is saying, we're not going to be clever with the Gospel. If you preach it in a clever way, with human wisdom, to try to make it fit people where they are, and you're not just preaching it openly, then, the Gospel loses its power. And I feel like we've seen that so much, and so we try to stay away from that. To preach the Gospel - it's the same all over the world. The lost people here, the lost people there; idolatry here, idolatry there. False ways of salvation here, false ways of salvation there. No fear of God here; no fear of God there. The condition of man is the same. The outward things are different. The customs are different, but man's need is the same in every country.

And so we're not looking for a cultural key, we just share the message of the Lord like we would do here. And this is some advice I would give to anybody thinking about missions or anyone that's already involved in missions, is do there what you would do here. And don't do things there that you wouldn't do here. It's amazing sometimes how confused or how strange it becomes when you go over there - the kinds of ministry that people create, or the secret ways that they think they can win people. But they would never do them in the U.S. It would be foolish to do them in the U.S. That may be an indication that it's just a foolish idea altogether.

So, when we go there, we just share the truth. We share what Christ has done. We share who Christ is. We share about Judgment Day. That one day everyone - it doesn't matter how rich or poor or what nation you're from - everyone will stand before their Maker and give an account. And only Christ's righteousness will be sufficient. So that's our message. The open statement of the truth. Commending ourselves to every man's conscience. Focusing on the truth. Not focusing on the errors particularly of the religion, although that can be helpful; that can be right. But even delving too deeply into the religion; trying to understand it all, trying to have an answer for everything, trying to show the errors or the fallacies in all their scriptures, that's a lot of times a step in the wrong direction. A lot of times, people need some of that, but you know, a lot of times, people are ready for the truth. And if you share the truth, it's powerful. Not to try to undo or systematically go through everything false that they believe.

Here's the thing about Hinduism, you'll never get to the bottom of Hinduism. It's just a mix of all kinds of different beliefs and different stories; different holy books. They don't have

one holy book like the Bible. There's like 20 or 30 books. And they're huge. And nobody reads them. So if you pour yourself into becoming a Hindu scholar to win the Hindus... A lot of times, you would have to teach them what they believe first, to undo it. Well maybe that's a sign that you don't have to go there. You don't have to go so deep. There's some simple things that we often times will show people. These are wrong. That everybody knows, but beyond that, I think we really focus on the truth. Focus on the Word of God. The Word of God is our weapon. The Koran or the Gita, to take their book, or their favorite books, and use them as the weapon is not what the Lord asks us to do.