

We believe discipleship is a direction
not a destination.



Evangelism in a Skeptical World

Week 7

Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- **Week 7 Ch5** Contextualization for Evangelism
 - How to Interpret Culture, Thoughts, Themes, Story
- **Week 8 Ch6** Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics
 - Enter, Challenge, Fulfill
- **Week 9 Ch7** Storytelling the Gospel
 - Styles of Learning, Story-telling



Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- **Week 10** Ch8 How to Give Evangelistic Topical Talks
 - What is a Topical Talk and how to give one
- **Week 11** Ch9 How to Give Evangelistic Expository Talks
 - What is an Expository Talks and how to give one
- **Week 12** Ch10 Religious Epistemology, Apologetics
 - Moving People from Hostile to Loyal



Contextualization for Evangelism

How To Interpret Culture

Chapter 5



Recap

- We have learned the gospel is communicated in many ways
 - A big way is based on a person's culture
- We have discussed the need to
 - Understand different cultural perspectives
 - To communicate to other cultures in ways they can understand
- But how do we do that?



Interpret Culture

- How do we, practically, study a culture?
 - I barely understand my culture, how can I understand another's
- How do we learn to interpret culture?
 - Once we study it how do we understand it
- We need to learn the skills of cultural hermeneutics
 - We need to work at it



What Is Its System of Thought?

- We can interpret a culture as it stands at a single moment in time
 - This is a **System of Thought**
- Simon Smart in A Spectator's Guide to World Views
 - Christian worldview, modernism, postmodernism, utilitarianism, humanism, liberalism, feminism, relativism, New Age spirituality, and consumerism



What Is Its System of Thought?

- There are many other worldviews not mentioned here
- The benefit of classifying is it gives us a place to start
 - The problem lies in it is a gross generalization
 - Do all Christians have the exact same worldview
 - No, similar yes but not identical
 - This also makes one classification opposite from another
 - In reality there is an overlap



What Are Its Themes? Method 1

- We can interpret a culture based on its themes
 - What's your mission, fears, reality
 - What's the dominant message of the culture
- A culture worldview can be discovered with four questions per James Sire
 - **Q1: Who am I?**
 - What is the nature, task, and purpose of being a human?
 - Pleasure? Creating Good? Legacy?



What Are Its Themes? Method 1

- Q2: **Where am I?**
 - What is the nature of the universe and the world in which I live?
 - Is the world personal, ordered, and controlled?
 - Or is it chaotic, cruel, and random?



What Are Its Themes? Method 1

- **Q3: What's wrong?**
 - Why is it my world appears to be not the way it's supposed to be?
 - How do I make sense of evil?
- **Q4: What is the solution?**
 - Where do I find hope for something better?



What Are Its Themes? Method 2

- Another method given by Simon Smart says
 - How does a culture understand these six themes
- Theme 1: **Reality:**
 - What is the nature of the universe and the world around us?
 - Is there a God or gods?
 - Is there only a material world or is there also a supernatural world?



What Are Its Themes? Method 2

- Theme 2: **Human nature:**
 - What is a human being?
 - Are we created or evolved?
 - Is there only a body or also a mind or soul?
 - Are we essentially good or evil?
 - Is there free will or determinism?
 - Are we nature or nurture?



What Are Its Themes? Method 2

- Theme 3: **Death:**
 - What happens to people when they die?
- Theme 4: **Knowing:**
 - How can we know?
 - What can we know?



What Are Its Themes? Method 2

- Theme 5: **Values:**
 - What makes something right or wrong?
- Theme 6: **Purpose:**
 - What is the meaning of human history?
 - What is the purpose of life?



Who Do You Save











- Example: The theme of youth and age
 - A ship is sinking, you can save either
 - An eight-year-old girl, or and eighty-year-old man
 - Who do you save?
 - Depends on where you are from
 - In the west the Eight-year-old, she has potential
 - Other cultures the eighty-year-old he has experience; he has been invested in



What Are Its Themes and Counterthemes? Method 3

- Paul Hiebert adds counterthemes to the mix
 - All cultures fall somewhere between a theme and its countertheme
 - Example Individual vs Group



Individual		Group
Private emotions		Public emotions
Order, predictability		Chaos
Material world		Nonmaterial world
This-worldly		Otherworldly
Secular space		Sacred space
Achievement		Acquirement
Hierarchy		Equality
Freedom		Control
Universal, whole picture		Particular, specific



Hierarchy

**Great Britain
United States**

Germany

Freedom

Control

**Scandinavia
Northern France**

Russia

Equality



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- The first three methods show a synchronic reading
 - That is a single point in time
- The Storyline method shows a diachronic reading
 - This is a theme over time
- What is the story of the culture
 - We can look at it in three parts



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Part 1: The way things should be:
 - A mission, a task, a journey
- Part 2: Something that stops this from happening:
 - The bad guys
- Part 3: Something that achieves the mission:
 - The good guys



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Little Red Riding Hood example
 - “Little Red Riding Hood took food to her grandmother”
 - This is not a story
 - Little Red Riding Hood went to take food to her grandmother (**the mission**)
 - But a wolf was waiting to eat Little Red Riding Hood (**the bad guy**)
 - But a woodsman kills the wolf and saves Little Red Riding Hood and the grandmother (**the good guy**)
- This is a story



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- To interpret a culture, we need to ask several questions:
 - What is the storyline of this culture?
 - What is its mission?
 - What should the world be like?
 - Where are they trying to go?
 - Who should they be?
 - Who are the good guys?



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Who are the bad guys?
- What is wrong with the world?
- What is stopping it from getting its happy ending?
- What is a sad ending and what is a happy ending for this culture?



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Let's go back to our friends Jane and Jack
 - Jane is the stereotypical Asian girl
 - Jack is the stereotypical surfer dude
 - What is their story?
 - Their mission?
 - Who are the bad guys?
 - Who are the good guys?



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Jane:
 - Her mission?
 - To become a doctor
 - Who are the bad guys?
 - Anything that get in the way of studying (Parties, friends, etc)
 - Who are the good guys?
 - Anyone who helps her study (Parents, teachers, etc)

What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Jack:
 - His mission?
 - To surf
 - Who are the bad guys?
 - (Parents, teachers, etc)
 - Who are the good guys?
 - (Parties, friends, etc)



What Is Its Storyline? Method 4

- Notice the swap?
 - Janes good guys are Jacks bad guys and vis versa
- With the tools we have we can see into Jack and Janes cultures
 - One is modern the other postmodern
 - Honor your parents the other do what you love
- Got it. But how does this help me with evangelism?



Contextualization for Evangelism

How to Connect The Gospel With A Culture

Chapter 5



Contextualization

- Now that we know our culture and their culture
 - We need to connect the gospel with the person's culture
- This is referred to as contextualization
- There are three tasks here
 1. Interpreting the gospel
 2. Communicating the gospel
 3. Applying the gospel to the hearers in their culture

Contextualization

- The aim of contextualization is to have a dialogue between
 - The cultures of the three major players in evangelism:
 - Our culture
 - The culture of the Bible
 - The culture of our hearer



Contextualization Strategy

- Our strategy for contextualizing is to enter and challenge a culture with the gospel
 - Remember if we only enter the culture, we over adapted
 - We have not been necessarily offensive
 - But if we only challenge the culture, we under adapt
 - We have been unnecessarily offensive



Contextualization Strategy

- By entering and challenging a culture we will make the gospel understood
 - We have challenged them with the gospel
 - Asked them to do the things of the gospel
 - And asked them to give up the things the gospel asks them to give up



Justification for Contextualization

- How can there be a connection between the gospel and human culture
 - When the gospel is in opposition to the culture
- Many Christians have grown up with a
 - Culture War model of belief
 - Everything in the worlds culture is opposite of God
 - But is this true?



The Incarnation

- Consider the incarnation
 - “The Word became flesh” John 1:14
 - Jesus, part of the trinity, entered at a cultural place
 - So, if the Word can enter a culture
 - Why can’t the gospel also enter our current culture
 - Or someone else's culture



General Revelation

- Everyone has a general knowing that God exists
 - God has revealed His truth to all people
- Take Romans 1:19
 - “since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them.”



Common Grace

- This is a continuation of general revelation
 - All that is good and true is from God
 - People see what is good
 - People see what is beautiful
 - They may call evil good but that is a lie and not of God



Eternity In Our Hearts

- We all have eternity in our hearts
 - Why else do people seek
 - To leave a legacy
 - To contact the dead
 - To create religions promising an afterlife
- All cultures have a way of expressing this longing



Sin

- All humans are sinful
 - So, we will find every culture expressing it's
 - Rebellion, idolatry, fallenness
 - Suppression of the truth
 - Its sin



Theological Justification

- Theological justification for contextualization
 - We can **enter** any culture because
 - Of the incarnation of God's Son
 - Of God's general revelation
 - Common grace
 - Our creation in the image of God
 - The promise that God has placed eternity in every human heart



Challenge All Cultures

- At the same time, we should **challenge** all cultures
 - With the gospel
 - Because all human cultures are affected by sin
- We have the language to enter and challenge
 - Because we believe that God has left a redemptive analogy in every culture
 - A means for communicating the gospel in a way that the people in that culture can understand



Caution

- In all of this, contextualizing and analogies, there is a warning
 - Analogies don't prove our truth
 - They make our point more plausible
- If analogies are all that is used in contextualization
 - Two things could be implied



Caution

1. The information for salvation is all that matters
 - None of Christian growth is communicated
 2. The entire Bible is not important or essential
 - That the revelation of God is not valuable
- The goal of contextualization is
 - A conversion of their worldview



A Method for Contextualization

- To start the work of contextualization look for any of the following
 - Find a Redemptive Analogy
 - Find the Existential Cry
 - Find the Storyline and Give the Gospel as the Happy Ending



The Storyline Jane

- Let's look at Jack and Jane again
 - What is Jane's existential cry and storyline?
 - Her cry isn't to be a doctor
 - She is crying out for security
 - Her story is not the doctor journey
 - It is to have status in her family
 - TO bring honor to her family



The Storyline Jane

- One way to communicate the gospel to Jane is by
 - Using security, belonging, and honor gospel metaphors
 - We can empathize with her need of security
 - But is there security in being a doctor?
 - There's always another test
 - You are a lawsuit away from failure
 - But Jesus promises us eternal security



The Storyline Jake

- What is Jake's existential cry and storyline?
 - His cry isn't to be a surfer
 - He is crying out for freedom
 - His story is not to be a surfer, only
 - It is to find freedom
 - Freedom to pursue pleasure, live life on his terms
 - Being a laborer is one way to achieve this, but...



The Storyline Jake

- One way to communicate the gospel to Jake is by
 - Using freedom as a gospel metaphors
 - We can empathize with his need of freedom
 - But is there freedom in being a laborer?
 - There will be bills to pay
 - You will need to work more to pay those bills
 - The pleasure of surfing will fade over time
 - Christ gives true freedom by giving Him our lives



A Christian in Your Own Culture

- Remember Jake and Janes youth pastor, Adam?
 - He thought he was giving them the gospel
 - But he was giving them his midwestern culture also
 - Adam needs to know more than just the gospel
 - Adam needs to learn to read the culture
 - Specifically, Jake and Janes culture

The Gospel Went Out

- The challenge ever since the gospel left Jerusalem was
 - To allow converts to be Christian
 - And still be their culture not the evangelist's culture
- Jews wanted Greeks to convert to their culture
 - No pork, circumcision, etc...
 - But the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) clearly stated
 - Greek converts did not need to convert to Judaism



Gospel Translation

- The gospel can be translated to any culture
 - Vietnamese, Siberian, Chinese, Mexican, ...
- You do not have to become Jewish
- You do not have to become a white American southerner
- You can still be a Christian and your culture!



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