

Biblical Missiology: The Ambassadorial Mindset

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Text: 1 Corinthians 5:18-21

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Contextualize con.tex.tu.al.ize: *place or study in context*

- There is no conversation without contextualizing.
- “Your theology dictates the way you are going to proceed with your contextualization.”
(Hesselgrave)
- Our contextualizing must be governed by God’s holiness and humility.

To contextualize the communication of God’s holiness and humility is the burden of our ambassadorial work.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Ambassadorial Ministry

- The Christ-work on earth was one of reconciling. “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (Jn. 3:17)
- The Christ-work on earth was one of holiness. “not imputing their sins to them”
- The Christ-work on earth was one of humility. “He humbled Himself” (Ph. 2:8)

“artifact”

- Stuff
- Blue jeans
- iPhone
- Pulpit
- Drums
- Guitar
- Pew
- Painting
- Wedding ring
- Surplice
- Building

- Computer
- Coffee maker
- Tie
- culture
- symbols
- Stuff or ‘signs’
- Standing
- Kneeling
- Bowing
- Dress
- Wedding ring
- Nice car
- Surplice
- Blue jeans
- Tattoos
- Church building
- Design of auditorium/pulpit in front
- Bowing of head

Culture: “what we make of the world” (Crouch)

1. To contextualize the communication of God’s holiness and humility is the burden of our ambassadorial work.
2. We have to communicate the universal missionary message in the context of cultures!
3. “Communication is the missionary problem *par excellence*.” (Hesselgrave).
Ambassadors communicate.

Ancient Ambassadors

- Considered inviolate and never imprisoned because they were representatives.
- Were nearly always about goodwill, seeking friendship and alliances.
- The powerful never sent ambassadors to the weak; they sent conquerors.
- Ambassadorial work was sometimes personally costly and required living in a foreign context.

“The word ‘entreat’ is expressive of an unparalleled commendation of the grace of Christ, inasmuch as he stoops so low, that he doesn’t disdain to entreat us.”

~ John Calvin

If you have an attitude of humility like Christ who contextualized (became man) to bring the message of reconciliation and you want to do the same thing, what is your primary concern?

There is no communication without contextualization.

Paul’s Example of Contextualizing

- Compare Acts 22 with Acts 26
- Paul's concern for the "outsider"
(1 Corinthians 14:23)
- Paul's use of symbol to say a message
(Acts 14:14)

Conscious of symbols

- "Words alone are not enough, but words combined with actions can have enormous power: Actions provide context for words"
(Stimson Center)

The Puritans and Symbols

- Rejected the surplice
- Refused to use the Prayer Book
- Refused to kneel for Communion
- Removed their wedding bands

Ambassadors

- Contextualize within Culture without compromise
- Confront Culture with Humility
- Change a Culture. "new creatures in Christ!"

Every single person we will try to reach with the gospel is embedded in some culture. Understanding the culture thus becomes a matter of evangelistic urgency. ~ Al Mohler

To contextualize the communication of God's holiness and humility is the burden of our ambassadorial work.