

BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE MISSIONARY

An effective missionary must understand scripture and must understand the culture in which he or she ministers. Paul demonstrates this with his approach in Athens when he named God as the Greek's unknown god, as recorded in Acts 17. This trait is also seen in the 1 Chronicles 12:32 description of one group of men chosen by God, "... men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do."

There are three distinct ways (mental models) that people in the west view culture:

1. **TRADITIONAL CULTURE:** The church is a central part of the community. absolute rules; accepted rituals and submission to authority; separation of the sacred and secular

Picture: A robed priest

Bible: The Bible is the absolute authority

Evangelism: Confront those who know the truth but are rebelling. Ex: EE, Win, FAITH etc.

Discipleship: Increase Bible knowledge.

Preaching: Expository/Exegetical – explain what the Bible says

Worship: Formal and predictable

Movement: The Revival Movement.

The assumption: Everyone knows the Bible and knows better.

2. **MODERN CULTURE:** Individualism; reason, critical and scientific methods; technology; progress

Picture: A white-coated scientist

Bible: The Bible is archaic

Evangelism: Seeker-targeted services – proving that the Bible is relevant

Discipleship: Life application and apologetic

Preaching: Topical (show how the Bible applies to life.)

Worship: Informal and non participatory

Movement: The Church Growth Movement.

The assumption: Everyone thinks the church is irrelevant and boring.

3. **POSTMODERN CULTURE:** Skeptical of certainty; sensitive to context; value subjective experience, togetherness, and humor

Picture: A rock musician

Bible: The Bible is one of many options

Evangelism: Relational, process. People belong before they believe.

Discipleship: Helping the whole person become like Christ in community.

Preaching: Story-telling – His story and our story (the mystery of God is appreciated)

Worship: Experiential, participatory, visual and relational

Movement: Yet to emerge – the Jesus Movement was a forerunner

The assumption: Christianity makes no difference because Christians don't believe or practice what they preach.