



SESSION #5 SEEKING THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF EVERY CULTURE

God has promised that He will save people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. He created the incredible diversity in our world and values the uniqueness of each ethnic group. The peoples of this world will one day soon carry some special piece of God's glory into the new earth (Revelation 21:24).

Why is there good in various cultures? People have been able to learn much about God and morality by observing His created works (Romans 1:19-20). Careful examination of the human heart and relationships has also led to

good practices since God has placed a knowledge of His basic law in every human (Romans 2:14-15). Ellen White adds, "The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and extensive research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought and opened to view vast fields of knowledge; and these men have been honored as guides and benefactors of their race; but there is One who stands higher than they. We can trace the line of the world's teachers as far back as human records extend; but the Light was before them. As the moon and the stars of our solar system shine by the reflected light

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At the same time every people group has its sins and ugliness. Besides the outright evil, Satan's lies and human selfishness has snuck into most parts of the world's cultures. As we evangelize and make disciples we must help each friend examine his or her culture. If we do not do this there will inevitably be a syncretism, a blending of wrong practices with new beliefs.

Ellen White noted this. "The advancing centuries witnessed a constant increase of error in the doctrines put forth from Rome. Even before the establishment of the papacy the teachings of heathen philosophers had received attention and exerted an influence in the church. Many who professed conversion still clung to the tenets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves, but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among the heathen. Serious errors were thus introduced into the Christian faith" (The Great Controversy 58).

Through the Holy Spirit's transforming power, disciples of Jesus from other cultures can learn to get rid of the bad, while valuing and improving on the good in their culture. As their lives are integrated with Christ's they can become a powerful force of good to their entire community.

Redeeming a culture is a fascinating process that we, and our international friends can do through careful listening to each other and to God's word.

Here are some extremely important questions to ask about the culture of the person you are seeking to disciple. They are also important questions for you to ask regarding your own culture. As together you seek to follow God's word you will find that both of your cultures and lives will be transformed instead of conformed (Romans 12:1-2)!

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1. What in the culture can we keep because it is beautiful, truthful, or noble and will thus give glory and honor to God?
2. What in the culture is directly against Biblical teachings?
3. What in the culture is tied in anyway to evil spirits?

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It may seem difficult to discern in regards to certain cultural issues. Sometimes foreigners jump to judgment too quickly and make wrong assumptions. Take time first to observe, and then ask questions for further understanding.

4. What does this practice mean?
5. Will this take away from the honor that is to be given to God as the only creator, protector and provider?
6. Will this take away from the glory of Jesus as the only Savior from sin and death?
7. Even if you will personally do not feel wrong doing it, will it cause someone else to stumble? (Romans 14).

Through prayer, seeking informed counsel, and humility God's glory will be beautifully seen.

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