

Contextualization in Asia: Theory and Practice

This edition constitutes a small contribution to the discussion on contextualization in Asia that focuses mostly on real examples from various Asian contexts. We begin with Tess Chai's article which explains how the term was coined, how it has been used and what it means. This, then, sets the framework for the rest of our discussion.

Daniel Qin, an MTh student from mainland China here at APTS, delivers a two part article that discusses Christology from two points of view. He contends that scholars throughout the centuries have focused on Christ's divinity (from above), almost to the point of ignoring his humanity (from below). He then contends that, following the Enlightenment in the West, a school of thought arose focusing on Christ's humanity, which clashed with the "From above" school. After explaining the strengths and weaknesses of both positions and dealing with some scholars' search for an alternative approach, he then gives some suggestions as to how Christology could be approached in his native Chinese house church context.

L.J. Custodio's article deals with the concept of grace in Islam. When a Christian mentions God's grace to a Muslim, how would that concept be understood, given that the Quran also teaches the grace of Allah? Is grace here the same as God's grace as revealed in the Bible? If not, can the Quran's concept of grace be used as a springboard to teach the biblical concept of the term? Why or why not?

The last two articles take theology to the streets, demonstrating the vitality of the Word of God in the regular, everyday lives of regular, everyday people. From where I sit, orthodoxy without orthopraxis offers little concrete hope to Asia's teeming millions, even those who migrate elsewhere. Thus the need for reflections like these.

Kimberly Snider opens her article with an honest question as to whether Christianity has transforming power. Looking around at her situation living in Manila, the corruption-filled capital of the "Christian" Philippines, one doesn't need to think long to understand the validity of her question. Fortunately, she was not happy to sit back and wait for someone else's answer. Devoting her Ph.D dissertation to this very topic, she interviewed more than twenty Filipino women, who

had come from a Roman Catholic background and who had long since stopped attending that church and who claimed to have had a born-again experience with Jesus. Their answers were not the ones she was looking for and they totally changed her view of the transformation process.

Matthew Todd then takes us on an excellent journey through the world of Chinese immigrants to Canada, his native land, and explores their struggles to retain their ethnic identity or assimilate. He then explores how churches can face the challenge to be missional within the Chinese culture and language. Thus, should they retain their cultural ethnicity or become multi-cultural through the use of English languages services? Then, he also confronts the issue that having English language services does not automatically enable them to become multi-cultural. Theologically, the issue is how to understand the Great Commission, the challenge to take the gospel to the "*Panta ta ethne*," (all the nations) while, at the same time, being sensitive to those who legitimately wish to retain their cultural and language heritage. As with many other issues, asking the questions is much simpler than asking them.

As always, feel free to write me through the APTS website, www.aps.edu. Those wishing to submit articles should do the same. Or, you can communicate with me directly through my personal email address, dave.johnson@agmd.org.

Warm Regards in Christ,

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