RAISING AWARENESS OF THE BIBLE

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The latest edition of Encounters Ezine is just out. It has an interesting content this month, all of the articles have been contributed by young missiologists. I suspect that the content is actually drawn from essays written at Redcliffe college, but I might be wrong. One paper in particular caught my eye, it is called *Raising Awareness of the Bible in Contemporary British Society: A case study of young adults who are not involved in a faith community.* To give you a flavour here are a few quotes:

> *Participants did not usually describe the Bible's relevance to their own lives and in some cases explicitly stated that it was not relevant to them personally.Â The extent of its relevance was seen as limited in a number of ways. Hannah suggested that it was probably irrelevant to people who did not attend church or were of another religion, although she acknowledged that people unconnected with the Church sometimes found comfort at events such as funerals. Some parts of the Bible were viewed as â€œnot necessarily relevant or helpful to us in today's societyâ€ and Jenny believed that â€œthere are a lot of issues, in particular personal understanding that cannot be helped by the Bibleâ€ . Similarly, Hay and Hunt found that the Bible was often seen â€œin the same light as Shakespeare; part of our cultural heritage, but hardly relevant to daily lifeâ€ ...*
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> *It was further suggested that an exclusive focus on the Bible might blind you to the â€œrealities*
> *of every day lifeâ€ and make it difficult to connect with people who had different beliefs.109*
> *Jenny raised concerns about the disruption of â€œexisting belief systems and cultures through*
> *an insensitive introduction of the Bibleâ€ , a view echoed by Emma who felt that â€œteaching*
> *other cultures and religions about the Bible can have a negative impact on ...communities where those teachings cut across what they believeâ€ .*
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> *The parts of the Bible that are sometimes overlooked by systematic theology may turn out to be those that are most of interest to people who do not go to church. Jenny described the way in which a friend had introduced her to the Song of Songs, pointing out â€œ'This is actually*
> *quite raunchy, this is quite different, there's all kinds of stuff in the Bible.' I didn't know about that at all before and I thought that was interestingâ€ . People in contemporary Britain may be interested in the Bible as a source of spirituality, rather than as a record of absolute truth or a moral guide and may therefore find the Psalms or wisdom literature a helpful starting point. Narrative may also be an appropriate genre in a postmodern society that values stories, even when it doubts their historicity. This was reflected by participants in the case study who displayed an openness to some of the Bible's messages, in spite of their questions about its factual accuracy.*

The whole article provides a lot of fascinating food for thought for those who are interested in promoting the Bible in our culture. Read more.