SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND

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Category: Mission

Brian has just written an excellent piece about how we need to present the message of Jesus in the language of our hearers. He takes us back to the Biblical narrative and shows us how the Biblical writers used art forms and stories that would have been easily understood by those who first read them.

> *The key to developing new language for proclaiming the Gospel is learning to listen to the culture for metaphors that may be adopted and adapted for use in communicating the good news. It is not about our creativity as communicators but about our capacity to listen and study attentively the culture. Our assumption is that our missional God in the person of the Risen Christ is leading his people into the world on mission. Jesus goes before us. It is our task to be attentive to the Spiritâ€™s leading so that we may build upon what God is already doing. In other words, the new language already exists. It is up to us to find it, refit it with Gospel content and deploy it...*
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> *...The creation stories in Genesis (Gen 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25) are profound in the setting of the stage for the remainder of the Scriptural story. But they are also part of the broader Ancient Near Eastern culture that produced other Creation stories. This is not the place to debate the origin of Israelâ€™s creation stories vis-Ã -vis those of her neighbors, but a close study reveals a common vocabulary that is deployed distinctly to highlight Israelâ€™s understanding of Creation in light of and against the Ancient Near East. Profoundly these stories declare the existence of a Creator God who is able to act unilaterally by his word apart from any context of conflict with the â€œgodsâ€ to bring into being and shape the Creation. Moreover elements that were worshipped by Israelâ€™s neighbors, e.g., the sun, moon, and stars of Day 4, are merely reckoned as parts of Godâ€™s creative work. (Read More)*

One of the implications in what Brian writes is that we need people who take Biblical scholarship seriously. Reading the creation account of Genesis without an understanding of Near Eastern creation literature means missing some of the important information. Obviously, not everyone is going to sit down and study Babylonian stories in the original - but we need scholars who will do this study and then make their work accessible to the rest of us.

On a slightly less academic not, you can listen to me talking about the importance of being understood when we talk about Jesus by clicking here or watching this slide show.

Talking About Jesus And Being Understood

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