

8 Keys to Having a Global Hermeneutic

More and more, there is a demand on the church to have the ability to apply Scripture to the global context. This is because the internet comprehensively connects people throughout the world.

The stories, needs, aspirations, and plight of various people groups come into everyone's space when they view their mobile phone, computer or watch the news (The devastation inflicted upon Ukraine by Russia should burden the hearts of all believers, irrespective of where they live). Consequently, the shared narrative of the globe should motivate the evangelical church to have a global hermeneutic (By "hermeneutic," I am referring to the science of biblical interpretation for appropriate application to a particular cultural context.)

For many decades, I have attempted to understand Scripture in light of the kingdom, which is transnational, since God claims all nations and people groups for His purpose (Ps. 2:8-9).

The following are eight keys to having a global hermeneutic:

1. Understand the popular passage in John 3:16 that declares, "God so loved the world." This is profound since it implies that we need to care for the whole world as God does and not just our nation.
2. Obey the command in Acts 1:8-9, which states that Jesus told believers to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. This means He expects His followers to be cultural anthropologists who could articulate and present the gospel in every culture, context and city.
3. Read the book of Acts. It is not only descriptive but prescriptive when it illustrates how the apostles ministered

to the gospel in different ways depending upon the cultural background of their audience. They did so without compromising the essence of the message.

4. Become a broad reader of global geopolitical news and watch documentaries about various cultures.

5. Have conversations and learn from people in your urban context (from different faiths, ethnic backgrounds and global perspectives) regarding religion and politics.

6. Consider going on mission trips or taking an immersion plunge to other countries to study their contexts and cultures.

7. Pray for the world, especially nations and cities, that God has laid upon your heart. This helps to give you His perspective and heart for a specific people group.

8. Extract yourself from your cultural context to correctly interpret and apply the biblical text.

Too often, many Americans read the Bible through the lens of American culture. This negatively affects the proper interpretation of Scripture, drowning out the voice of its original meaning. Thus, reading the Bible through a mere cultural framework can distort one's interpretation and ensuing application of Scripture. For example, one can erroneously equate the values of a nation with the importance of the kingdom of God.

In conclusion, the good news is that since the mid-20th-century, we have had the greatest opportunity since the first few Christian centuries to understand and unite the global church because of the facility of air travel, wireless communication, social media and the metaverse.

I pray that we will steward this opportunity to become a united force that communicates the mind and heart of God to a

lost world. {eoa}

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