

Missions conference reflections on God and the good news

Three Models of Worship and Theology

- Model 1: “God is love and everything is okay”
 - Unitarian and individualistic approach
 - Jesus as moral example only
 - Natural conclusion leads to universalism
 - No real good news or transformation
- Model 2: Event-focused crucifixion theology
 - Centers on individual decision/encounter with cross
 - Faith becomes work-based despite grace language
 - Separates work of Christ from person of Christ
 - Leads to judgmental, contractual approach in missions
 - Creates competitive missionary culture focused on results
- Model 3: Trinity-centered life and communion
 - God as three-in-one eternal communion
 - Participation in divine life rather than individual contract
 - Christ reveals God perfectly - no angry deity behind Jesus
 - Worship flows from being, not doing
 - Mission flows from God’s love, not human effort

Cross-Cultural Ministry Applications

- Islamic contexts
 - Trinity addresses core question: “How can God be love if singular?”
 - Muslim friend’s insight: “Allah does not have to love”
 - Nabil Qureshi’s conversion hinged on understanding Trinity
 - Afghan women gasped at story of woman caught in adultery
 - Trinity is essential, not peripheral, in explaining who God is
- Tibetan Buddhist contexts
 - Buddhism is works-based with no concept of forgiveness
 - Detachment vs love are core difference
 - Environmental concern connects to Christian stewardship
 - Key question: “How do I know your spirit is more powerful?”
 - Earthquake survivor: monastery prescribed walking around stupa, feet damaged
- Chinese context observations
 - Government banned resurrection teaching (recognized its transformative power)
 - While UK doubted physical resurrection, China saw its political threat
 - Legalistic exported Christianity creates judgmental attitudes

Theological Foundations for Mission

- Trinity as core, not peripheral doctrine
 - “Grammar for understanding God” - foundational to Christian faith
 - Only God can reveal God - unity essential for true revelation
 - Christ’s baptism reveals trinitarian context from beginning
 - There is an unbreakable bond between Father, Son, Spirit
- Good news redefined
 - Lost communion with God restored through participation in divine life
 - Both sides of covenant fulfilled in Christ
 - Freedom from shame, burden replaced by joy and peace
 - Mission becomes participation in God’s mission, not human effort