

Avoiding Comfortable Syncretism by Doing Critical Contextualization

By Bruce L. Bauer

The purpose of this article is to clarify some of the issues involved in the contextualization/syncretism discussion, to sharpen Adventist focus on the problems of under-contextualization, as well as over-contextualization, and then to suggest a balanced approach to contextualization, to highlight the ongoing challenges to contextualization within Adventism, and to list safeguards for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it approaches the task of mission contextualization.

Perhaps it is good to remind each other at the beginning of this paper that the only reason why we would ever put our church through the challenges of doing contextualization is that every

person in God's creation has the right to hear a clear gospel presentation that is unencumbered by syncretistic cultural baggage. Much of the syncretism that we observe in our world is caused by poor contextualization, not over-contextualization, so it is important that we learn to do contextualization right.

Why Contextualize?

Some might ask why contextualization is important. But without careful contextualization the communicator of the gospel runs the risk of sending a garbled message, of misrepresenting the Good News, of creating non-theological barriers to the gospel and in reality making it harder for people to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Garble the message

When the people who hear our message receive an impression that is vastly different than what we intended, we have garbled the message and true communication has not taken place.

Misrepresent the Good News

When people listen to terms and concepts that are clear in their meanings to us as we at-



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tempt to communicate the gospel to them, but if they end up with a skewed understanding of Jesus, forgiveness, salvation, and other biblical topics, we have misrepresented the Good News.

Create non-theological barriers

By not being culturally sensitive and not using culturally appropriate terms we could give the impression that Christianity is a foreign religion and not for the people we are making the presentation to. Our presentations could actually become a hindrance and a barrier to the

guage, and religion of the people being addressed (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989:xi).

Definition of Terms

Contextualization

Contextualization is the presentation of the eternal truths of Scripture within the cultural setting of a group of people.

We do not water down the impact of the Word; we present the truths of the Word to the people in a culture in such a way that they understand those principles and truths. Perhaps we should also state that culture is never an

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very ones we want to introduce to Jesus Christ if we do not do it in a contextual way.

The necessity of doing contextualization rests on four basic presuppositions. First, the Great Commission must be fulfilled and all people evangelized. Second, no matter how we may define world evangelization, it would include the idea that the people being evangelized have a right to an understandable hearing of the gospel. Third, contextualization must be true to the authority and message of the Bible. Fourth, contextualization must relate to the culture, lan-

guage, and religion of the people being addressed (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989:xi). excuse for sin. I believe it is possible to have a deep respect for culture without allowing culture to water down the impact of the biblical message.

Christian communicators do not seek to contextualize the gospel message, rather they seek to present the timeless message of the Scriptures by using the cultural forms, words, and symbols of a people in order to better present that timeless message. This is what makes cross-cultural communication of the gospel such a challenge. It is not an easy work. Not only must the communicator understand the biblical message

well, but the language and culture of a people group must also be understood before effective communication can take place.

Syncretism

Syncretism is a word that also needs to be defined, for it is often part of any discussion dealing with contextualization. Syncretism is the “blending of one idea, practice, or attitude with another. Traditionally among Christians it has been used of the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements” (Moreau 2000:924).

Syncretism is also something that is much easier to see in others’ belief system than it is to see in our own. I have a lot of fun in my classes at the seminary by asking the international students what it is about the American Adventist Church that they find troubling. Notice one of the responses. Some have noticed a lack of community in the American church where the individual is emphasized to the exclusion of the family and the body of Christ. Does the American tendency towards rugged individualism and independence go against biblical principles of community and being our brother’s keeper? When the American Church holds such individualistic views in opposition to the principles of Scripture, is that syncretism?

At the Symposium on Faith Development in Context held at Andrews University in January 2005, Jon Paulien presented a paper entitled, “Dealing with syncretism in insider movements,”

in which he suggests that “in the process of conversion syncretism will always occur for a time” and “syncretism is always the unintended consequence of a healthy desire to make the gospel relevant” (2005:4). Then a little later in the paper Paulien suggests that “everyone who makes changes in their faith goes through at least a short period of syncretism” (2005:13).

This suggestion, that in the process of introducing a person to faith in Jesus Christ everyone goes through a time where they hold a syncretistic blend of true and false beliefs, is troubling for some.

Perhaps an illustration can help us understand what Paulien was suggesting. I was teaching a Bible class to a group of Japanese college students. We had been studying together for several weeks and for that particular night I was teaching about sin. Towards the end of the presentation I made the statement, “We are all sinners, right?” and received a lot of blank looks. Feeling that perhaps they had not understood my question I asked it in Japanese. “*Watakushi takushi wa minna sumibito desu ne?*” But instead of getting the agreement that I expected they all shook their heads, “no.” I think we sang a song, and had a quick closing prayer. Then I started to investigate what the Japanese understand the word “sumi” or “sin” to mean in their language. What I found was fascinating.

The typical Japanese Buddhist thinks of a sinner as some-

one who has broken one of the five *сила*, or moral precepts (Halverson 1996:59) by committing some terrible offense against a person such as rape or murder, and who has been caught and is now being led off in handcuffs to prison. That was the typical Japanese view of sin, so when I said, "We are all sinners, right?" they were totally confused. As soon as I understood the cultural definition of sin I then went on to pour the Christian and biblical meaning of sin into their Japanese word. I taught that the biblical concept included all that the Japanese concept of "*sumi*"

In this particular case what was needed was only an addition of Christian meanings to the traditional Japanese word for sin. However, in those situations where concepts must not only be added, but must also be removed from a word, symbol, or ceremony, the task is even more difficult and the chance of syncretism greater.

Take for example the term "*Allah*" as used by Arabic speaking Christians. Allah, to them, has had biblical meanings attached to the term, while on the other hand the same word as used by Arabic speaking Muslims has Qur'anic meanings attached to

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entailed, plus selfishness, plus the idea of not measuring up to perfection, plus offence against a creator God.

What we ended up with was a subgroup of people who understood "*sumi*," but not in the traditional Japanese sense. They had added biblical content to the word and now viewed the word in a broader sense with Christian meanings attached. But for several weeks these people who were coming to faith in Jesus Christ held a mixed concept or a syncretistic blend of old and new in their understanding of what sin was.

it. In a conversion process an Arabic speaking Muslim would not only need to have biblical meanings added to his understanding of the term, but he would also need to have some of the Qur'anic meanings stripped from the word as he moves towards a biblical understanding. During that process of moving from a Muslim understanding of the term to a Christian understanding of the term syncretistic concepts are present.

This illustrates the hard work of teaching and changing the basic building blocks of a culture and its people. It takes time, but,

if it is not done, then the people we are witnessing to will not have a biblically shaped worldview and will not understand biblical values and principles. Conversion is always a process, and in that process people move from holding beliefs and practices that oppose biblical principles, to a blend of old and new, and then as the Word of God continues to impact their value system they move closer and closer to having a biblically shaped worldview and value system. But in the process of conversion, there is the danger of syncretism—the blending of

critical contextualization and engaging in good biblical teaching. Whenever we present the Good News in new cultural settings, there is the danger of syncretism as people move from the old ways to the new ways in Jesus Christ. The important point in this matter is to never be satisfied in leaving a process uncompleted so that people remain in a state of syncretism. Intentional critical contextualization and a strong emphasis on the Word are the antidotes that will move people to a healthy understanding of biblical principles. I will share what

Sin is found in the cultural practices of every society, and for the Christian witness not to allow the Word to root out such practices goes against the very purpose of mission.

truth and error. For some groups that process may only take a few months, but for others the process leading to a biblically shaped worldview and value system may take several years. The important thing is that people continue to allow the Word of God to shape and direct them in the process. The danger is that people might stop in their spiritual growth before the process is completed.

What is the antidote to syncretism? How do we minimize syncretism in the conversion process? By doing intentional

I mean by critical contextualization later in the paper.

Issues in Contextualization

Throughout the history of Christian mission there has been a battle between those who see little need for contextualization and those who are so sensitive to culture that they allow culture to dominate the biblical message and in the process distort that message. These two extremes have been called by various names. Hiebert has referred to these extremes in

Under-Contextualization

Under-contextualization occurs when the Christians introducing the Good News to a people group label most of the culture as pagan and unfit to carry the gospel message. In such situations the music forms, architectural styles for religious buildings, marriage and funeral ceremonies, dress, and a host of others cultural forms are rejected. Rejection is based at times on the ethnocentrism of the Christian communicator and at times on the sense that the form is too closely tied to the old cultural practices. Rejection of the local forms can also occur

surface (Hiebert 1985:184-5). First, there is a tendency, when taking customs and practices away from a people and in the process of labeling them as pagan, to create a cultural vacuum. Christian missionaries then try to fill the vacuum by giving the people substitute customs and practices from the missionary's home culture. This process often results in the church in that part of the world being viewed as foreign, strange, and dominated by foreign ways and practices. I will give examples of this later in the paper that illustrate why under-contextualization is such a barrier to gospel witness.

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because it is just easier to give new Christians in a new area the songs, Sabbath dress, architectural styles for churches, marriage and funeral ceremonies those forms and practices that the Christian communicator is used to and comfortable with from his home culture.

When whole areas of a culture are written off as not fit for use in the communication of the gospel, the results are often less than what was desired. When under-contextualization is practiced, three major areas of weaknesses

Second, under-contextualization causes many of the cultural practices of a people to go into hiding, to go underground, with the result that the people continue to practice many of the old ways in secret. This type of syncretism is caused by not dealing with the old ways and by not applying the principles of the Word to the issues in the culture. The result is syncretism as the old fears and beliefs exist underneath, but with a veneer of Christian practice on the surface. There are countless examples of this happening in

Adventism in many parts of the world, with a lot of such syncretism resulting from a lack of dealing with evil spiritual forces. There is also the sad example of some in the Adventist Church in Rwanda where issues of tribal allegiance were allowed to remain in syncretistic blend with biblical truth that resulted in Adventists killing Adventists.

Third, under-contextualization causes church leaders and missionaries to assume the role of policemen. When the local body of believers is not allowed to or encouraged to apply the principles of God's Word to their own culture they learn to live by the rules given to them by the first missionaries. They never grow in their faith to the point where they can assume their proper role as part of the world hermeneutical community of believers who discern the leading of the Holy Spirit. In such situations, Church leaders are the rule givers and the rule enforcers—the religious police.

Under-contextualization has been practiced for understandable reasons. Those who under-contextualize often have a deep desire to root out evil practices and beliefs associated with the culture of the people being presented with the Good News. There is a low tolerance for sin and evil in the culture. There is concern that the local forms are too tainted with evil to be used by God in communicating his message.

But Christian workers who are unwilling to work at communicating the gospel through

the cultural forms of the people often are themselves tainted with the view that their culture is a “Christian culture,” whereas the culture to which they go is pagan. Cultural pride and ethnocentrism could be partially responsible for such attitudes. We must also admit that we can more easily see the pagan splinter in other peoples' culture while we are blind to the pagan plank in our own culture. It is so easy to miss syncretism and sin in our own cultural setting. We must also remember that Adventist mission had its heyday during the age when “manifest destiny” and the “white man's burden” were common expressions of Western imperialism and ethnocentrism. These are phrases that we find very offensive today, but the results of mission done under that mindset linger on in the form of under-contextualization.

Examples of Under-Contextualization

Under-contextualization has occurred in recent Adventist mission history because of unwillingness on the part of some of our evangelists to study and learn about the culture in which they preach. Examples from the 1990s in Russia are painful reminders that traditional evangelistic preaching that ignores the culture and religious practices of a people often leaves the local church with antagonism and hostility.

Evangelists who preach a traditional set of messages without seeking to understand the local

needs, worldview, and values often baptize large numbers of people who retain a syncretistic blend of true and false because many of their areas of confusion and need were not dealt with in the sermons prepared for a Western audience. I am particularly concerned with organizations that send evangelists out with little if any understanding of the local situation. One size does not fit all when it comes to bringing people to Jesus Christ. There must be careful understanding of culture, beliefs, and worldview

of the library the young people gathered to sing with guitars and to sing the music they had written about the themes of the Sabbath, the second coming, and Jesus their Lord. What a contrast! Is it possible that we have given the impression that for Sabbath School and church only North Atlantic church music is acceptable to praise God with? Are we perhaps sending the wrong message to Latino young people suggesting that the music they have written is not good enough for church but

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to allow the Word of God to root out the old and create a new set of beliefs and values.

Several years ago I taught at an Adventist college in the Caribbean. I noticed a very interesting thing about the singing on that campus. On Sabbath morning for Sabbath School and church, singing was done from the *Adventist hymnal*, but much of the singing was lackluster, done without spirit and passion. Then on Friday evenings on the steps

can only be used on the steps of the library on Friday nights? Under-contextualization allows for foreign cultural domination and often results in a religious system that looks foreign to the local people.

When I first went to Japan I noticed that an imported custom caused a great deal of discomfort for the Japanese. On those Sabbaths when there was a baptism, the Japanese pastors followed the suggestion of the *Church*

manual exactly by having the candidate for baptism stand in front of the church while he read the thirteen articles of faith. The candidate stood alone, uncomfortable, feeling almost as if the whole group was involved in her interrogation. No attempt had been made to contextualize the procedure—just a blind following after the suggestions in the *Church manual*.

It was more than I could take. The pain was too obvious, so I contextualized the procedure by having the candidate read the statement of faith followed by the whole congregation responding with “I believe that, too.” The change of atmosphere was incredible. The person felt that she was a part of a group, that others believed like she did, and that these were people who would support her in the new faith. Under-contextualization can create non-theological barriers that often make it more difficult for people to come to faith in Jesus Christ or that even prevent them from giving the gospel an honest hearing. The packaging of the gospel in foreign or western forms is also syncretism, for it mixes culture, another culture, a foreign culture with the biblical message.

When I arrived in Cambodia the previous administration was requiring the pastors to wear shirts and ties. Those of you who have been to Cambodia know that it is hot and humid, with mud and dust depending on the season. Villagers viewed a shirt and tie as foreign, and they

then assumed that the religion of those who wore the shirt and tie was also foreign. We made a change, giving the pastors an off-white shirt made with a Chinese collar. It was interesting to learn that village people recognized those who wore such a shirt as a spiritual teacher.

Singing, church ceremonies, and pastoral dress are little things, but they can impact how local people view the message about Jesus Christ. Under-contextualization can distort the message and cause syncretism just as over-contextualization can damage the Christian message. Adventists have under-contextualized in a multitude of areas by not dealing with issues such as fear of evil spiritual forces, dowry, house dedications, field dedications, harvest festivals, naming ceremonies, use of instruments in worship, use of pictures and symbols, etc.

Is it possible that much more damage has been done to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through under-contextualization and its associated syncretism than through over-contextualization? The sad thing about this is that those who would become agitated by over-contextualization because of the obvious syncretism can feel very comfortable with under-contextualization. I have often heard church leaders say, “Isn’t it wonderful, you can go anywhere in the world and our Adventist members sing the same songs, have the same order

of worship and do things just like we do at home?"

We are very comfortable with under-contextualization because under-contextualization often produces Christians who look and act just like we do, but with devastating affect in terms of those look-alike Christians being unable to witness effectively in their home cultures. Such Adventist Christians look foreign, feel dominated, and out of sync with the local culture of their friends and neighbors. Under-contextualization produces syncretism just as surely as does over-contextualization by mixing

able with the syncretism of under-contextualization should never allow us to complacently accept it.

Critical Contextualization: The Process.

Paul Hiebert has suggested an approach to contextualization that has come to be known as "critical contextualization" (1985:186-7). Critical contextualization is a four-step process that begins with a deep appreciation for the Word of God. People who are coming to Christ must be brought to a position where they are willing to deal biblically with

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in Western cultural baggage and calling it part of the gospel.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church grapples with the challenges of presenting the Good News effectively to the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese worlds we must not remain comfortable with under-contextualization that also distorts the gospel and creates non-theological barriers that prevent people from hearing a clear gospel presentation. The fact that we are more comfort-

all areas of their lives. This is a process that needs to be practiced by the Western church as well, as they hold up to the biblical norm issues such as TV and video viewing, dating practices, leisure time and activities, use of disposable income, simplicity, etc.

The second step is to lead the group in looking uncritically at the cultural item or practice. This step involves gathering information. Understanding is sought concerning the deep issues and meaning of the cultural practice.

The third step involves applying biblical passages and principles to the cultural item in question. What aspects of the practice are incompatible with principles of the Word? What aspects are neutral? What aspects are opposed to biblical principles?

The fourth step is the hardest for most church leaders to practice—to let the local people, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, join in the decision of what they can do and what they cannot do in the light of their understanding of biblical principles and the leading of the Spirit. This is an interactive process where local people are often challenged by the missionary or church leader to look at local issues in new ways and to see things they had never seen in their culture before. This is what international students at the seminary do for the American church when they challenge us to consider our lack of community. When we are unwilling to let local groups of Christians have an interactive part in deciding such issues, we perpetuate a system that produces weak and dependent Christians who can only accept the rules and practices given them. Those who only live by the rules handed down will never become a full part of a community that reads and discerns the principles of God's Word for themselves.

Critical contextualization needs to be practiced in both the new areas of the world where the gospel is being heard for the first

time, but also in the Western world where each generation of Christian believers needs to also hold up to the biblical norm the practices that their generation struggles with. In 2004, the General Conference committee took hours going back and forth on a document dealing with music issues. Perhaps we as Adventist leaders would have a greater impact on Adventists around the world if we would teach all age groups how to do critical contextualization.

Many Christian parents forbid their children to listen to rock music; they lay down the rule: there will be no listening to rock music in this house. What happens is that the children listen to the music at their friends' homes or in secret, so in reality the parents end up being policemen. Other parents just give up and allow their children to listen to whatever they like with their children never learning the lesson of discernment and just accept the ways of their culture.

Case study: A group of inner-city young people in Los Angeles were faced with the question of whether or not they could listen to hard rock music. Most of them were new converts from gangs and drugs and knew well the message and power of contemporary music.

The youth leader in the Los Angeles church used critical contextualization in dealing with the rock music issue. He had the young people bring all their CDs of rock music to a Bible

study. After a discussion of the meaning of Christian lifestyles and the place of music in one's life, he had the young people play each CD and evaluate it in terms of biblical principles. They destroyed those CDs that contained messages that went against the message of the Word, and kept the rest and listened to them without having guilty consciences. The next Sunday they brought their broken CDs and presented them to the church. There was no longer any need for parents or church leaders to monitor their listening habits. They had learned discernment for themselves (Hiebert 1985: 190-1). Perhaps we would do well to teach our members biblical discernment by learning how to do critical contextualization.

Ongoing Challenges to Contextualization within Adventism

There are at least three areas where ongoing challenges exist that hinder the Adventist Church from being able to maintain healthy contextualization throughout its various levels.

Leadership Awareness of Missiological Issues

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church becomes more international and diverse, it is more and more important that leaders at all levels of the Church be given opportunity to understand cross cultural issues and be trained to think missiologically. Why? They must have a clear missiological

understanding of cultural issues. Without widespread understanding, what one leader builds up in developing a contextualized ministry, the next leader dismantles. It is much easier to destroy contextualized ministries in the Church today than it is to build them. Why? Again, because it is easier to and there is more comfort in syncretism at the under-contextualization level than there is at the over-contextualization level. It is comfortable to see people worshipping, and dressing, and doing things just like me. It is the rare person who works intentionally to help people become a community that grapples with how to live within a biblically shaped worldview.

It is easier to give rules based on my cultural understanding of life than to do the hard work of understanding the culture of others and allowing the gospel to work through that culture. So what is the solution? I believe the solution includes widespread education of leaders at all levels of the organization concerning the issues of ethnocentrism, how culture affects our perception of reality, and even our reading of the Word. It includes an understanding of the process of contextualization and training in cultural sensitivity issues.

Ministerial Training that Teaches on Cultural Issues

Ministerial training programs need to offer balanced training in the areas of contextualization. Church leaders, in order

to be effective in cross-cultural situations, must not only know the Word of God well, but must also understand the people to whom they wish to share the Good News. Yet, as far as I know, only two collages in the South Pacific division teach at the B.A. in Theology level a course in cultural anthropology or in the area of missiology. Mission classes that stress topics like worldview, culture, contextualization, and that encourage sensitivity toward people of other cultures, ethnicity, and religions are usually only offered at the M.A. level. In many

worked on long, complicated documents that spell out lifestyle issues and practices in great detail. It is easier to govern by edict, and it is easy to issue guidelines and policy papers that spell out how to live and act. But would it not be better to teach all levels of the church to do critical contextualization so that each segment of the Adventist Church could become a hermeneutical body of believers, applying the principles of God's Word to their cultural situations. I firmly believe that instead of more guidelines, more time should be spend teach-

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parts of the world only a few Adventist pastors are trained to the M.A. level. Unless we begin teaching cultural sensitivity at the B.A. level, we will perpetuate the current problem with future generations of Adventist pastors, leaders, and teachers, so that they too will have the same difficulties understanding why other people do things in different ways.

General Conference Documents that Model Contextualization

The General Conference has a responsibility to model a contextualized approach in its documents and guidelines. We have all sat on committees that have

ing the principles to guide each people group in doing critical contextualization. Perhaps more time of the General Conference should be spent in teaching principles to guide in decision making than sending down the line of command lists of guidelines on music, dress, eating, simplicity, etc. If we could inculcate the principles of critical contextualization in the hearts and minds of all people groups in our church, we would have far fewer issues to deal with administratively. Perhaps we need seminars that teach and deal with the issues. We could start right here in North America, teaching this generation of Seventh-day Adventists how to

do critical contextualization with the cultural issues of Sabbath observance, dress and adornment, music, and simplicity. Other parts of the world would have other issues to grapple with such as life cycle rituals, funerals, weddings, birth ceremonies, liturgy, places of worship, dealing with evil spirits, charms, magic, and a host of issues that are non-issues for many of us. But that is the point. The Adventist Church can never issue enough guidelines to cover all the issues. It would be better to teach each group of people how to apply the Word to their situation.

I have mentioned the danger of over and under-contextualization, and have suggested critical contextualization as the preferred approach. But what are some safeguards that can maintain doctrinal unity in our church?

Safeguards for Contextualization

Whenever contextualization is in progress, there must be safeguards that act as a check and balance for those situations where the process leaves the center “Ideal Contextualization” area and begins to move into the dangerous, syncretistic, over and under-contextualization areas. Hiebert suggested three important safeguards: (1) the Word of God that is taken as the final authority for faith and practice, (2) the belief in the priesthood of all believers that assumes that the Holy Spirit is capable of guiding all in helping them ap-

ply the principles of the Word to their lives, and (3) the realization that the task of contextualization is not the work for a few individuals, but is a responsibility that the whole church should be engaged in. The church from different regions of the world has the responsibility to give counsel and advice to the church in other parts of the world. There is no room for lone rangers or people insisting in doing their own things without being willing to open the discussion to the larger hermeneutical community (Hiebert 1985:191-2).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The topic of contextualization is relevant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church because every person in God’s creation has the right to hear the gospel in understandable terms.

It is normal for people to be ethnocentric, mono-cultural, see things only from their perspective, think that their way of thinking and viewing God and religious topics is the only right way, and believe that their styles of music, worship forms, and order of worship are normative and the *right* way to do things. However, this “normal way” if applied to mission, results in under-contextualization leading to syncretism that creates non-theological barriers that keep people from accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

As we increase our mission activities in the Muslim, Jewish,

Hindu, and Buddhist worlds and as we bring an ever-increasing number of people from those areas of our world to faith in Jesus Christ, we must no longer Westernize before we Christianize.

Let us not be complacent and do nothing, for doing nothing continues the practice of under-contextualization that leads to syncretism, builds barriers that keep people from hearing a clear presentation of God's Good News, and in the end denies people the right to hear the gospel clearly in their own cultural context.

When the people of Russia or China or Turkey or Cambodia walk down the street and pass a Seventh-day Adventist Church and hear singing, they deserve to hear music from their part of the world and not imported music from Europe or America. When people in the Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu world look at an Adventist church in their part of the world, they deserve to see a building that is culturally appropriate and not a replica of a church in Kansas. Animistic peoples from Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas deserve theological answers to their questions, and not just answers to questions being asked in the secular West. We dare not allow under-contextualization to erect non-theological barriers that keep large numbers of the world's unreached people from having an understandable hearing of the gospel. If people reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, I want them to reject

him because they do not want to obey and follow him, not because I mixed my gospel presentation with my foreign culture.

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