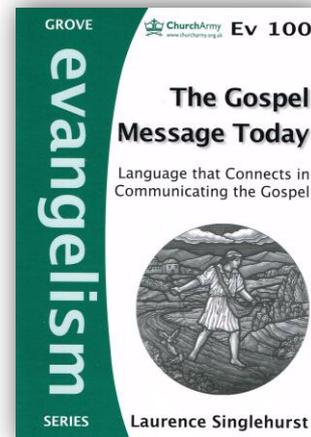


# Laurence Singlehurst : The Gospel Message Today – language that connects in communicating the gospel

Grove 2012 : Notes by Alison Morgan April 2013

*An excellent contribution to the ongoing discussion about how to communicate the gospel effectively to a generation which has never heard it.*



## The Communication Challenge

We have become a mission field.

We have been overselling the benefits of the gospel, giving expectations of health and avoidance of pain that were not real. The parable of the sower should have taught us otherwise.

## Contextualisation

St Patrick did this – abandoning the language, connecting points and metaphors of the Roman world, but biblical ideas linked to his understanding of the culture. The Celts were a martyr culture; they were dominated by fear; they were involved in human sacrifice because they felt they had offended their gods. And they were into slavery. Patrick connected with them in these areas.

Marcia, a friend of Laurence's, did the same in the Amazon – after 13 years she'd made a breakthrough, based on the discovery that the tribe had a historic vision of a Christ-like person who would set them free from their custom of committing suicide.

Our culture has changed; what connected before doesn't now – old fashioned terms like sin and repentance, over-consumerising of the gospel in the 80s and 90s.

Some examples of more meaningful language – selfishness (sin), changing your values (repentance), follower/apprentice (disciple), God's rule (kingdom) etc.

**The Gospel message in 4 component parts** – perhaps we should tell it like this:

1. A compelling hope – a hope that is personal to the believer, and a hope that is external to the world. This is what will attract people today. People today want to connect, to relate, to be friends – they are looking for relationship. They want a better world. Stories – the lost treasure, the pearl of great price.
2. An overwhelming problem – sin. This word has an underlying reality which gets misunderstood. Selfishness, lostness is. Our culture says live for yourself. We have put happiness before goodness. The gospel offers a different way. 'A better way to live.'
3. The fabulous answer – how can we be reconciled to God? 2 Cor 5.15, he died for all.
4. An answer lived out – how do we describe the process of repentance, being saved? Surrender is a better concept than saved; rethink is better than repent.

## The Jesus Proposition

The current generation know little about Jesus. No use giving them theological explanations of salvation – tell them a story about Jesus! Take 4 stories from the gospels that are meaningful to you, memorise them, think about them, and when you get to talk about your faith tell them instead of preaching the gospel...

Experiment – think of connect points. Look for a bridge to create a rapport; look for a difficulty, pain; describe a compelling hope; paint a picture of the Christian life and some of the cost involved.