



Christ In You

FROM CULTURE TO CHRIST

Wherever the gospel is preached new believers must transition from their particular culture to the new life in Christ. In North America this usually means renewing the mind out of humanism into the truth of the gospel.

Every culture is unique and varies from place to place across the world.

In this newsletter, I want to give you a couple of examples from Africa.

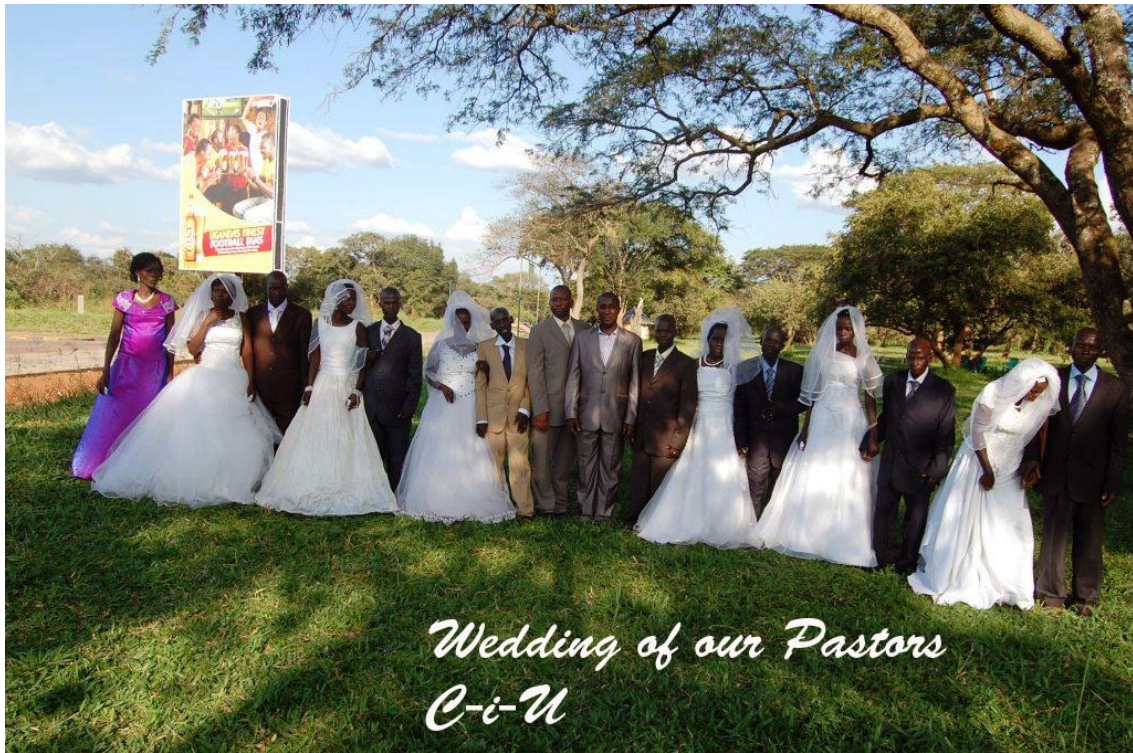


Pastor Raphael



Cathy, Pastor Raphael's Wife

First in east Africa in the country of Uganda. Our associate Pastor Raphael has successfully brought the gospel to several villages and he has planted many new churches. Several of the new believers became pastors. Over time he became aware that many of these pastors had never been formally married though in many cases they had lived with their “wives” for many years.



When Raphael became aware of this he knew he had to legitimize the relationship of these pastors with their wives through a wedding. Because there were several that needed to be married, Raphael organized a mass wedding.



Raphael recently sent me a letter regarding his organizing the mass wedding:

Hi Dr Paul,

The reason why we decided to do a mass wedding was because almost all our pastors had never done a wedding for different reasons. You will remember that we started many of our churches by faith trusting God to send us the right people to pastor them. And He was truly gracious.

We worked with people who had a burden for their communities but not necessarily trained. We relied on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Where we felt peace about it we went ahead . We bless God for this turned out to be the best approach.

All those churches

are strong and growing.

All we needed was to train them and also help them sanctify their marriages as some had gotten married traditionally. If we wedded them one by one, the cost would have been too high to bear. So we had to organise a mass wedding for 7 couples.

It was a very colourful occasion. In fact the whole of the town had come to witness the spectacular event. We had to remove the back side wall in order to allow people who had surrounded the church to witness.



A Pastor and His Family of One of Our New Churches in Northern Uganda. This Pastor and His Wife Were Married In the Mass Wedding.



The Pastor and His Wife In the Preceding Photo



Here They Are Officially Married

It was so glorious that on stage I had to stop the ceremony because some people wanted to get saved.

That wedding changed many lives.

There are many people who do wish to get married . Periodically, we hope we could do those mass weddings as they really win people to Christ, but they are very expensive. This year we shall be planning one as the Lord enables us. Pray with us.

God bless.

Raphael



Traditional Dancing At the Wedding

"Master, will you marry me?"

A rather large church in western Uganda asked me to preach on a Sunday morning. There was a special “engagement ceremony” during the service. Once again I was exposed to the tradition of a different culture.



The Bride on Her Knees Before the Groom, Giving Him Gifts and Proposing



The Groom Received the Gifts and Accepted the Proposal

During the ceremony it is customary that the prospective bride will get on her knees before the potential groom and ask him if he will marry her. In part of the ceremony she is expected to give him gifts, as you can see in the photo. She also addresses him as “Master.”

Some cultures in the world are just better than other cultures! It would be wise for me not to tell you in this case which culture I think is better!

Polygamy

Across the continent in west Africa, in the country of Benin, I came across another example of the need to move out of culture into Christ.

In wandering through a primitive remote village I noted that a man would have two or three or sometimes four wives. Our associate Nadjombe explained to me that this was a real dilemma.



These Two Friendly Women Are Married to the Same Man

Several decades ago a church-wide council was called in that part of Africa to decide what to do with these new Christian men who had multiple wives. After prayer and study of the Scripture they came to the conclusion that if a man had more than one wife and he became a Christian then he should not make any changes. Considering the long-standing relationship with his wives and the multiple children involved it would be very confusing to break those relationships. It was simply made clear that single men would know that they could only have one wife.



Demonstrating to Me A Homemade Musical Instrument

Essentially it is a matter of the heart. We let go of our cultural background and give our heart's allegiance to Christ.

After all, our relationship to Christ is forever and eternal. The culture in which we live is mortal.

As CS Lewis said:

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat."

From our culture and our entire lives we move away from the mortal to the immortal in Christ. Hallelujah!

Paul Rains

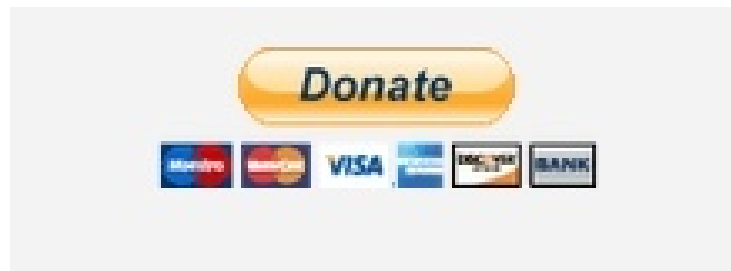


Just a Reminder

It is very effective for us to help native Christians proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. They do not have to learn a new language. They already know the culture. Concepts like furlough and culture shock are unknown to them! We can often support 20 pastors or evangelists who are native to the country for the same price as one "missionary" from outside their country.

Currently we are assisting our associates in West Africa, East Africa and India.

We need your help!



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Some Scripture verses related to Christ and culture:**Acts 17:26-28**

26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, **28** for

“In him we live and move and have our being.” (ESV)

Colossians 3:11

11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (ESV)

Galatians 3:28

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave[a] nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

Revelation 7:9-10**A Great Multitude from Every Nation**

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, **“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (ESV)**



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