

## Cultural Differences

*"Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Acts 10:15 NIV*

I am thankful for the many times that the Lord has allowed me to see Him at work in other parts of His vast vineyard. I have come to realise that not only are there many differences in culture that require adjustments in my life, but that God is the author of cultural sensitivity. He knows where we need to grow and the changes that need to occur in our hearts and minds in order for that maturing to take place.

Let's look at Acts 10 for a few minutes. Peter as you know was at the epicenter of Pentecost. God used him to speak the praises of God in other languages, but when it came time for him to move out across the vast divide between Jew and Gentile, he struggled big time! Look at all that he saw happen and all that was done by God, yet he remained imprisoned by the prejudice of his own Jewish culture.

We are no different. We have our man-made traditions, personal preferences, prejudices, and cultural biases. Now there is nothing wrong with any of these things unless of course they conflict or contradict that which God desires. Letting go of the familiar and comfortable is one of the hardest lessons we have to learn in life. I can assure that it doesn't come instantaneously or without some pain. So how do we jettison the trappings of 'culture' that hinder Christ from being glorified in me?

In Acts 10:9 we see Peter in prayer, that's a good place for each of us to be found. We need ask the Lord to reveal to us our cultural bias as we venture into another culture. Now remember...there are numerous cultures and sub-cultures within the youth of Australia. If you have some fears, let them be known.

Here are some things worth considering from Acts 10:

- Ask God to teach you what is clean and unclean, not your culture.
- Don't give up because you encounter something difficult in another culture –v.17
- As you go into a new culture be sure to go with humility and a desire to serve –v.25, consider the 'stretch' for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile house
- Crucify the natural desire to be served, rather than to serve –v.26
- Do not go into a new culture with all the answers and remedies –v.29, ask questions

Always keep in mind that YFC is not so much a ministry of tasks to be done, as it is a ministry of life in Christ to be lived. At Urbana '76, Elizabeth Elliott said...'The will of God is not something you add to your life, it is a course that you choose. You either line yourself up with the Son of God and say to the Father – Thy will be done – or you capitulate to the principle which governs the rest of the world and say – my will be done.'

At the end of this race we call life, the most radical call with the greatest blessing comes from living life out of commitment to the Lordship of Christ. So when cultural conflicts with Christ – guess what has to change? May you rely wholly on the changeless One, who alone is able to change you more into His likeness, as you enter the many cultures of this world!

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