Course CM Egypt Sept. '08 (2) Mission: motives and methods

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Motives in mission

What makes you going? What are your motives? How do you know that you are called? What is the difference between motivation and calling?

´The acknowledgement that God is the Source, Christ the Message and the Holy Spirit the Power, the church the embodiment of the calling to witness, must lead to personal reflection: ´Who am I, what moves me, which motives do I have and what is my destination?´

How do you recognize Gods calling?

1. Discerning guidance. Words from the Bible, a sermon, a talk with a friend, study, circumstances, people, etc. go together in finding God´s guidance.

2. Discerning Gods specific calling. We discern between our longing to serve God and the knowledge that He has called us to a certain field, to a certain work.

3. Discerning our gifts. Ambition, motivation and calling work together to discover and ´explore´ our gifts/talents. It helps us to try out our possibilities, to grow in character, and to acknowledge our limitations.

4. God´s grace helps us to restore, to recover and to bear fruit. Jesus says:´ Your fruit will be found in Me´ and: ´Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of man´.

Ⓟ Reflection: Share in little groups 1. what is your most important source of motivation in life, 2. what are your main fears, 3. whether you discover Gods guidance and calling, or not.

Motives in the Bible

1. Obedience. Matth. 28:16-20. This commission is given to people who have fears and doubts (vs 17). The commission stands between the proclamation of Jesus and His promise. The great commission is presented by John in the form of the story on the lake and at the shore in John 21:1-14.

2. Love and concern. Look at Matth. 9:36 Jesus who sáw the crowd. And 2 Cor. 5:14 ´The love of Christ moves us´.

3. The motive of eternal judgment. Compare 2 Cor. 5:11. This is also the motive in the book of Jonah: ´be converted not to be damned.´

4. Zeal for the glory of God. What makes you sad or raises your anger like the apostle Paul in Acts 17:16?

5. Following Jesus in the midst of society: just to live out and to present His example in today´s world. Compare John 21:21 . The motive of incarnation.

It is striking that nowhere in the New Testament you will find a commission to go and witness directed to the whole church. Instead we find many texts about the nature of the people of God: ´You *are* the light of the world and the salt of the earth´(Matth. 5:13), of Phil. 2:15 ´You *are* stars..´or 1 Peter 2:9 ´You *are* a chosen people to proclaim..´

- Ⓟ Reflection. Let us look through all the Biblical motives and share 1. what speaks most to us and for what reason, 2. which motive is mostly absent and why.

The Christological motive of mission (John Stott)

1. The incarnation is the *model* of mission (Phil. 2 Jesus left the glory with the Father and humbled Himself ,even unto death). He identified Himself with sinful people. This is also important motive for the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:20-22. What are consequences for *our* context?

2. The cross is the *price* for mission. We already see this motive in the suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 50:5, 6 and 53:3. Jesus applies this principle on His own life. ´The corn cannot bear fruit until it falls in the earth and dies´. Witness is connected with suffering (cf Luke 14: 26, 27; 2 Tim. 2:10 and 2 Cor. 4:12). The Gospel is more linked with suffering and failure than with success and glory.

3. The resurrection is the *guarantee* for mission. Because the risen Lord has all power in heaven and on earth, He sends his disciples to all nations.

4. The ascension and glorification of Christ are the *ultimate motives* for mission. Phil. 2: 10, 11. ´Every tongue will confess and every knee will bow..´ Here is the encounter and confrontation with secularism, materialism, Islam and other religions.

5. The gift of the Spirit is the *power* of mission. Look at the disciples in Acts 1 and in Acts 2. Where does the difference come from? See the role of the Spirit in Acts 8, 11 etc.

6. The Return of Christ holds the *necessity* of mission. Compare Matth. 24:14. The preaching of the gospel among the nations is one of signals of the end of time.

Methods in mission

The early Christians used many different methods to witness. Let us compare ways and methods in the book of Acts. Michael Green (professor in Oxford) wrote in his book ´Evangelism and the early church´ about the secret of the rapid spread of the gospel in the first centuries. Next to proclaiming, preaching, debating, dialoguing, suffering, Green notifies that in particular the example of daily life of the early Christian and their moral choices were crucial. This happened in a world comparable to our world (with many different religions, syncretism, pluralism, materialism, occultism etc). Still there are some main differences between us and the early Christians: post-Christian features like the raise of Islam and the raise of ´secular religions´ like modernism, post-modernism and globalization.

The value of dialogue (as one of the methods).

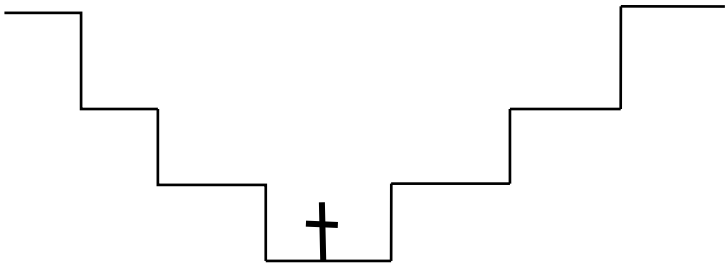
Why dialogue is important?

1. To learn to know each other´s worldview, values, motives and convictions.

2. Seeking matters of common concern, looking for fruitful cooperation with the eye on the wholeness, righteousness and peace in society.

3. Remove stumbling stones and prepare the ground for clarification of the heart of the gospel.

The ´model´ of dialogue presented by the German missiologist Walther Freytag.



Ⓟ Reflection: read Acts 11, Peter´s experience. 1. In which way you can speak about a ´second conversion´ of Peter. 2. Can you discover moment in your own life of ´second conversions´?