

Confronting Christianity

Week Two: Doesn't Christianity Crush Diversity?

Pre-Group Reading Material: Chapter 2 (Pages 33-45)

Questions:

- While many people see Christianity primarily as a tool used by the West to suppress other cultures, McLaughlin challenges this narrative, saying; *"While Christianity held a monopoly on Western culture, Western culture never held a monopoly on Christianity."* (34) If what she says is true, why do you think many people think about Christianity as a tool of cultural oppression?
- Do you think it is possible to evangelize across cultures in a way that respects the receiving culture? If so, how would this look? How might the author's comparison with literacy help provide us an answer here? (34-35)
- What biblical stories or texts demonstrate Christianity's early multicultural, multiethnic nature? (35-37) If you knew about these stories before, had you realized their significance for this discussion? Which of these stories/passages is most powerful to you and why?
- In this chapter the author describes the significant, growing Christian populations in Africa, The Middle East, India, and China. Did any of this information surprise you? What are some possible reasons why Christianity is compelling and attractive to people in these places?
- Rebecca describes how a conversation with a Nepalese friend helped her understand the meaning of her own name better. Then she suggests; *"If I want to appreciate the texture of the Scriptures, I need to listen to brothers and sisters who grew up in cultures closer to the Ancient Near East than my own. Every culture has its blind spots. Diversity helps us all to see."* (41) What have you learned about your culture by interacting with someone from another culture? What might other cultures understand about Christianity that we don't naturally understand?
- McLaughlin suggests that when she moved to America from England, she was stunned to find that many people associated Evangelical Christianity with racism. (44) What are the reasons for this impression of Evangelical Christianity, and is it fair at all?
- The author says; *"Read the New Testament, and you will find that trying to marry biblical Christianity to white-centric nationalism is like trying to marry a cat to a mouse: one is designed to hunt the other, not mate with it."* (44) What is the difference between having an appropriate appreciation of our ethnic identity and nation, and the racially based nationalism the author describes? How do we know when we have crossed the line?
- If what McLaughlin says in this chapter is true; *"Christianity is the most ethnically, culturally, socioeconomically, and racially diverse belief system in all of history."* (37), then why don't we experience this reality more in our own church body? Should this bother us? If so, what should we do about it?