



CAPE TOWN 2010 SESSION SUMMARY AND SEGMENT SYNOPSIS

This Summary and Synopsis document has two components:

Page 1 is the summary of all the speakers in the 90-minute session.

Pages 2 and following include a synopsis of each specific video segment extracted from the full 90-minute session.

FULL SESSION SUMMARY – TRUTH: Making the Case for the Truth of Christ in a Pluralistic, Globalized World

DATE OF SESSION: 18 October 2010
SUMMARY SUBMITTED BY: Ellen Zaretsky (CT2010 Communications Session Summary Team)
PRESENTER(S): Carver Yu, Michael Herbst, Os Guinness

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE/ PROBLEM: What is truth? How do you determine truth in a global world of pluralism and secularism? How do you proclaim universal truth of the gospel in a culture that sees it as insignificant or irrelevant? It is a challenge to proclaim truth without being arrogant or irrelevant? Os Guinness answers the issue by dealing with the question, “Why does truth matter?”

KEY POINTS:

- *Truth in cultural differences - pluralism proclaims that all religions are equally true; truth is a cultural construction valid only for the culture that constructs it
- *Pluralism proclaims that all truth is relative
- *Pluralism is the most virulent kind of monism – the monism of indifference
- *Secularism is the denial of God at its heart

Carver Yu set the stage for the discussion of the issue of pluralism by posing this statement: If the truth is relative, then the gospel is arrogant. Michael Herbst posed the issue of secularism: If the truth is without God, then the gospel is irrelevant. Os Guinness concluded that the gospel is profound, timely and effective. He summed up with six reasons why truth matters: 1) Theological reason – truth is about God; 2) The absolute/exclusive nature of truth in Christ – Jesus is the only way to God; 3) High view of truth; 4) Christians are guardians of truth; 5) Truth combats hypocrisy and evil; 6) Truth nurtures growth in Christ; Christians become people of truth.

TAKEAWAYS

We can avoid the charge of arrogance by seeking to present the gospel from “below,” serving people who need the truth and do not know it. Jesus is the one, unique, absolute truth for all people. He is the truth (John 14:6). Christians must be guardians of absolute truth in Christ. We worship and serve the God of truth.



1. SEGMENT SYNOPSIS

TOPIC: Truth and Pluralism
SEGMENT TITLE: Sung Sketch: "What Is" - Cape Town 2010 Performing Arts Team
SEGMENT DATE: 18 October 2010
SYNOPSIS WRITERS: Don MacLeod and Bill Armerding (CT2010 Globalink Team)

In this modern depiction of John 18, we listen to the encounter between Jesus and Pontius Pilate. One man is bound and stands before an authority figure who questions his claim to be a king. The Jesus figure sings of his kingdom and his purpose in being born: to witness to the truth. The Roman governor is confused, not understanding the desire of the Jewish leaders to destroy this man. He questions the nature of his kingdom and how one can know truth.

The question repeats as to what is truth. Truth is seen in the drama as a relationship in which Jesus offers himself to the unbelieving Pilate, inviting him to listen and recognize the truth.

1. How did the drama project the message of truth as a relationship? Did it evoke anything about the topic?
2. How would you answer the question, "What is truth?"

By Alison Siewert and Michael Eubanks; music by Michael Eubanks. Performed by Michael Eubanks and Daniel Jones with Lerato Mofokeng, vocals and keyboards. Directed by Alison Siewert.

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2. SEGMENT SYNOPSIS

TOPIC: Truth and Pluralism
SEGMENT TITLE: Presenting the Truth of Christ in Post-Socialist Europe - Michael Herbst
SEGMENT DATE: 18 October 2010
SYNOPSIS WRITERS: Don MacLeod and Bill Armerding (CT2010 Globalink Team)

Dr. Michael Herbst notes that today in Germany people are living lives without faith. Christianity is a bygone memory. When asked to define truth, there are several responses. Each response reflects disillusionment with absolute truths that have failed. Germans believe that religious convictions reflect arrogance. These convictions can lead to violence. Even the Christian is tempted to want Jesus just for himself or herself. But Jesus is Truth in a person. Keeping that truth to one's self is impossible. People find truth only if they put their trust in him. But if we believe Jesus is indeed the truth, then we do not force that faith on others. We witness best in telling the story, loving, serving the poor, asking for trust, getting alongside of others in their lives. In this way the Holy Spirit builds the church and God opens hearts to receive the truth.

Study questions:

1. Compare your neighborhood to Dr. Herbst's description of a German neighborhood today. How does his description connect with your experience in your context?
2. Are Christians sometimes responsible for the misgivings of unbelievers?
3. What makes keeping Jesus to ourselves an easy option in today's world?
4. Do Christians sometimes come across like "hitting people with a wet towel"?
5. Does the fact that church planting can take time represent an obstacle to witnessing?



3. SEGMENT SYNOPSIS

TOPIC: Truth and Pluralism
SEGMENT TITLE: Presenting the Truth in Post-Communist China – Carver Yu
SEGMENT DATE: 18 October 2010
SYNOPSIS WRITERS: Don MacLeod and Bill Armerding (CT2010 Globalink Team)

In Dr. Carver Yu's presentation on "Christian claims to truth in an Asian context", he describes China in particular and Asia in general as a region of diversity and pluralism but without any absolute truth. The tragedy of the Chinese people is that they are a nation without God and without truth. Despite all the rhetoric about dialogue, pluralism has left China with confusing ideologies which have led to a nation in turmoil. In fact, pluralism tends to silence all consensus and discussion of truth.

Because of these facts it is difficult for an Asian person to believe the Biblical claims of truth. The Christian message is that Jesus Christ is the one way to God the Creator. He is the one source of truth. He is the giver of all life lived in communion with God. For Christians to convince Asians to believe in Jesus Christ there must be testimony from transformed lives energized by Christ living in them.

Study questions:

1. In the face of these lessons how can Christians have a greater impact in their own world?
2. How can the church in general work to deal with the challenges of diversity and pluralism?



4. SEGMENT SYNOPSIS

TOPIC: Truth and Pluralism
SEGMENT TITLE: Why Truth Matters - Os Guinness
SEGMENT DATE: 18 October 2010
SYNOPSIS WRITERS: Don MacLeod and Bill Armerding (CT2010 Globalink Team)

Dr. Os Guinness speaks on the subject “Why Truth Matters”. He reflects on the times when history and the gospel converged and spawned reform movements, the creation of universities and modern science. At other times they collide, as they often do today. Where the gospel collides with society it is condemned as arrogant and intolerant but it remains profound, timely and urgent today.

Only a high view of truth honors the God of truth. Those who weaken their hold on truth weaken their hold on God. We think in believing and we believe in thinking. Without truth, science and all human knowledge collapse into conjecture. Only a high view of truth can sustain our proclamation of God’s truth. We have a duty to confront false claims of truth. To abandon truth is to abandon faithfulness. Only a high view of truth is sufficient for combating evil and poverty. Both hypocrisy and evil depend on lies. We are to so live in truth that we become people of truth. We must be people of good news and people of truth.

Study questions:

1. What can our church do to ensure that all the believers in Jesus Christ understand the importance of believing that his truth is valid and essential for our society?
2. What ways can the church in which I live and serve attract the attention of society and initiate the kind of discussion which will validate truth to those around us?