**Society of Mentors Meeting**

**March 15, 2022**

**Theme:**

This call centered on a time of Q&A regarding connecting when you preach. Guest speakers were Austin Gardner and Chris Gardner.

**Introduction: [**[**3:38**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=03m38s)**]**

Connecting when we preach. For preaching to be applicable, you need to understand the people and the culture. Know your people and their needs. Preaching is difficult anywhere, but now you have arrived on the mission field. You have Bible knowledge, and now you need to understand the language because the wrong language will not convey the right truth. You also have to understand their reality. Your illustrations need to be something they can understand.

“The problem with preaching is that we are experts at answering questions that no one is asking.”

Jesus was a master communicator. He asked questions in response to people’s questions to make them reconsider and think things through.

In your native language, it is difficult to connect. It is harder as a missionary in another language. One thing that sets people apart who do well is that they understand how to understand the questions that people want to know.

Hopefully, over time you will become more of a master of understanding and communicating. But you will never master it; it is a daily task.

**Understanding how to connect: [**[**13:30**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=13m30s)**]**

Connecting is common ground. There is a great chasm and not much in common with people from other parts of the world. So you need to learn to find common ground. So you have to lay aside most of who you are and where you came from, and you have to adapt. Preaching is culturally related.

Jesus left heaven and royalty, came to earth, and submitted himself. In his 30 years, he lived so much like a Jewish person that no one could fathom that he wasn’t.

You can’t ask them to come into your world; you have to go into their world.

If the Word of God is true, powerful, cutting, and is the sword. Then, the dead truth is our problem, not the Bible’s. Your preaching is going to shift/change.

There is a cultural divide, and there is also an intellectual divide of what you know about the scriptures and what you have to communicate about the scriptures.

Preaching is bringing the fire you felt while you were in the study of the scriptures to the pulpit. When you get excited, you have to make sure that the people understand that. However, your level of knowledge goes up, then you want to expound the things on a higher level, but you have forgotten where you started with

If I knew nothing about the Bible or the scriptures, how would you take the complexities of the scripture and make it applicable?

Make sure you understand the divides so that you can bridge them. Look at different perspectives, ways, opinions, etc. Let’s not be experts at answering questions that no one is asking. Every time Jesus spoke, he impacted people’s lives.

**Connecting when you preach: [**[**23:54**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=23m54s)**]**

Preaching is not just what you say; it is what they hear. Because you come from a different cultural background and language, you have to understand the nuances of learning the language.

You can do it in English, but in a foreign language, it can compound the issues. Common ground: you have to understand what they mean when they say/hear a word.

**Why Should I listen to you and what you are saying?: [**[**28:07**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=28m07s)**]**When they walk in, in their mind, they are thinking, why should I listen to you and what you are saying? Unless you work in a European country or a more advanced country with wealthier people, you arrive in a nicer car, live in a nicer house, eat nicer food, have an American passport, and you are not like them, so they are questioning. What do you have to say that is going to help me? What do you understand about me?

That’s why Jesus became so Jewish, and Paul said that he became all things to all men that he might, by all means, save some. He had to learn the different cultures very well.

You want to preach so badly, but you don’t know who you are talking to yet. You don’t understand their world. You think you understand a lot, but you don’t yet.

One thing that complicates these issues, especially for missionaries, is also a problem in America. Not only is there a divide, but if you are not careful, you become the hero of the story, especially in your illustrations. You do not have the answer. You are not the person who knows everything. Don’t become the hero. You are not your own savior; you need a savior too.

Learn about the country you are in: try to learn about their political leaders and the heroes of their society; folk stories; look at the faces on their money.

“They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” John Maxwell.

Find the common ground if you want to connect, and they have to know you care about them.

As a preacher of the Gospel, you are not trying to impress. You are trying to connect with people.

D.L. Moody: “Jesus called his followers sheep, not giraffes.” So put the food down where the sheep can get it.

They need to know that you know where they are at, and you are bringing them the truth of the Word of God, and they can take and use that.

They need to feel like they know you; you understand and have been there. You need to mix with your people.

Hebrews 5:1-3 “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”

Jesus is God incarnate, God in the flesh. But he became a Jew so that he could become like us so that we could know that he understands, loves, and cares for us. Your people should also know that about you. They don’t need to know your victories. They do not need to aspire to be you; they need to aspire to be more like Christ. Tell them about your failures, sins, insecurities, struggles etc, and that will help them grow and understand how the Bible is for them as well.

Vulnerability is one of the best ways to connect. I hurt, you hurt, we can connect. We can connect based on our suffering.

We root for the underdog, so being smarter, richer, better than them is not what they are looking for. So when you are proud, arrogant, a bully, shoving people around, they are not rooting for you. Don’t be better. Don’t be loud, know it all, belligerent. Do not state your superiority. Understand your weaknesses. You are not higher up than they are.

**How have you grown through the problems you have faced? [**[**46:14**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=46m14s)**]**Admit the problems. Admit the need. Quit acting like you are better than them. Don’t be the hero. You make mistakes. You got help, and you learned. So if you want to connect, admit that you need help. In our arrogance, we look at our people like a racist, like they are less than us. So how did God help you in a situation?

People want to connect with a learner, not superman, who came from a better culture and was superior. People love to learn, but they hate to be taught. Jesus taught through stories. Be careful that you are helping them to get where they are going.

At times, missionaries can seem to be racists, especially with the word national. It separates and differentiates you from them. You are not superior because you are white or rich. If you went to the mission field to build a big ministry, you went for the wrong reasons. You are going to serve the people and tell them about Jesus. Just make sure you have the right view of the people.

Don’t let what you want to say get in the way of what they need to hear. They need the truth. You can use humor to connect, but you will need to learn enough to understand their humor. They need to enjoy the message. Don’t be boring. Let them laugh with you, and don’t take yourself so seriously.

**In Communist or Islamic countries where it is against the law to mention the name of God, how do you preach Jesus? [**[**54:43**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=54m43s)**]**

Biblically, if there is a government mandate that contradicts the scriptures, we are to obey the Biblical mandate. Speaking of Christ is a mandate, and we can not live without telling others about what makes me who I am. However, I have not faced the danger that others face in those countries. However, getting missionary support to live overseas and not speaking of Christ is not right. You have to speak of Christ. Boldly. With every part of your being, but I have never had to live in that situation.

The book of Acts could become your handbook because when they were persecuted, they prayed and afterward spoke even more boldly. Do not attack Communism or Islam. Tell about the goodness of God/Jesus and what he does. Preach on love and forgiveness. Do not badger or beat down the other religion. That is not what we are called to do. Use the Bible like it is true and allow God to use his Word.

**How do you explain the difference between Baptist and Catholics to a non-believer who asked you, without offending: [**[**59:29**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=59m29s)**]**

Let’s start with what we can agree on. Don’t attack the Catholic church. Agree on the belief of the Bible. Just look at the Bible and teach them that. Go to the scriptures; do not attack the church or their foundational beliefs. Go to the scriptures and let them teach themselves.

When they ask the differences, they know there are differences. They want to see how you are going to act/behave. Be kind. Remember, they don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Tell them we believe the Bible. Drop out of attack mode, don’t be defensive, and find common ground.

**I am fresh out of language school and about to start my first church, so how do I connect with people: [**[**1:04:23**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h04m23s)**]**

One of the best things you can do is learn about their historical heroes. Listen to their stories. Learn what they like to talk about. They will love it if you learn about their past/heroes. Be careful because their heroes may be enemies of your American education. But it doesn’t matter because you are not there as an American; you are there as an ambassador of Christ.

Watch their TV shows to learn about their culture. Watch their stand-up comedians. Read their newspapers. Read their Bible. Spend hours with the people. Jesus took 30 years to become Jewish before he preached to the Jews.

To be honest, if you have just finished language school, you have just gotten started, and you are still extremely ignorant. Even your talking ability takes 8-10 years before it becomes more like your language. You have to work at the language, or you will never really get it.
**Is it a compromise to avoid controversial topics when preaching in your country? [**[**1:10:53**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h10m53s)**]**

As you go through the scripture and they grow and mature, you will get to other topics, i.e., the trinity. If you are preaching the scriptures, there are only a few passages where the Bible talks about the trinity. They hate their sin; they fear guilt and death, so preach messages on salvation, security of your salvation, forgiveness of your sins, how to walk in fellowship with God, how to get over depression, etc.

**What preaching style do you use when starting a new church on the field? [**[**1:13:07**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h13m07s)**]**

When starting a church on the field, preach to the room/crowd. When you have a smaller number of people, you can still use the same emotions and emphasis but do so in such a way that feels right in the room.

Look at politicians to see how they communicate.

Preach louder if there is a bigger crowd/space; preach quieter if there is a smaller room/crowd. You don’t have to stand up; Jesus often preached sitting down. Tone it down and communicate. Stop using the idea of what you call preaching and make sure you are communicating. The smaller your congregation, the more conversational your preaching style needs to be.

What do you preach? We are expositors of the Word. We take a truth in the Word, and we pull it out so others can see it. Expose the truth of the scripture. Be an expositor of the Word.

**With a new culture, should I stop using personal illustrations in my preaching? If so, where is the best place to look for connecting illustrations? [**[**1:17:42**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h17m42s)**]**

You can still use personal illustrations; just make sure they are relatable. They have families, children, etc.

Do not discuss your financial problems unless you discuss a time when you were very poor. Do not discuss your retirement accounts, stock market accounts, etc.

Discuss areas where you are weak. Use a little bit of self-deprecating humor.

**How do I learn the depth of the language and culture that will allow me to communicate properly? [**[**1:20:30**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h20m30s)**]**

Read Language Acquisition Made Practical. They lay out a good way to learn the language and culture.

Get a mentor. Let him help you. A good mentor will not always agree with you. Find someone who will help you and correct you.

Read the newspapers every day. Read the Bible. Watch the news. Watch a TV program.

**What do you do when the Bible in their language uses terms that confuse people because of changes in the meanings and vernacular of the language? [**[**1:22:33**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h22m33s)**]**

When you meet educated people, they will understand those terms. Learn what those terms mean. Learn how to take the Bible and get it into terms that we can use and understand. Jesus used stories to illustrate a point.

**If our goal is to train men, should our preaching be copyable by the young men we train? [**[**1:24:38**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h24m38s)**]**

It should be the simplicity of the Word of God. Be simple. Simplicity can be reproduced. Don’t use complex words; explain things to people in a way they can truly understand.

**What did you do when you preached, having them correct your language in order to connect? [**[**1:27:30**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h27m30s)**]**

Tell them you want to be understood. Let them correct you. Make a joke about it. Become friends with them. Stop trying to be the big shot preacher that no one can talk with. Let them interrupt you; let them help you.

**How do we use less Bible but more truth when they are new Christians and are not used to finding the passages in the Bible? How do we familiarize them with more scripture but not bog the service down with flipping through the scriptures? [**[**1:28:15**](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2156592991?wtime=01h28m15s)**]**

Use a projector

Print out and give them a copy of your message notes or the scriptures.

Try to stay in one passage with references that support that passage.

Do not try to turn too much. Stay in that one passage.

Never assume they understand Bible stories or characters.
Memorize the books of the Bible.

So you are slowly teaching them how to find the passages/scriptures.

**Book Recommendations:**

Jedd Medefind; Erik Lokkesmoe: The Revolutionary Communicator: Seven Principles Jesus Lived to Impact, Connect, and Lead. [Amazon.](https://www.amazon.com/Revolutionary-Communicator-Principles-Impact-Connect/dp/0974694258)

John Stott: Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today. [Amazon.](https://www.amazon.com/Between-Two-Worlds-John-Stott/dp/0802875521/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=1C83TRB40MRCD&keywords=John+Stott%3A+Between+Two+Worlds&qid=1648088714&s=books&sprefix=%2Cstripbooks%2C649&sr=1-1)

John Maxwell: Everyone Communicates, Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently. [Amazon.](https://www.amazon.com/Everyone-Communicates-Few-Connect-Differently/dp/B082WJQ62S/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=20CLKJWRBNNPB&keywords=John+Maxwell%3A+Everyone+Communicates%2C+Few+Connect.&qid=1648088836&s=books&sprefix=john+maxwell+everyone+communicates%2C+few+connect.%2Cstripbooks%2C515&sr=1-1)

William J. Lederer; Eugene Burdick: The Ugly American. [Amazon.](https://www.amazon.com/Ugly-American-Eugene-Burdick/dp/0393356728)