

## **Cross-cultural communication in the book of Acts**

Look at the following speeches in the book of Acts. How does the speaker (Peter or Paul) shape their presentation of the gospel towards the understanding of the hearers?

### Acts 2v14-39 the gospel for the Jews

The Jews were the people of God, and were waiting for the Messiah. They believed that the Old Testament contained prophecies about his coming.

### Acts 10v1-2, 27-43 the gospel for the 'God-fearers'

The 'God-fearers' were non-Jews who were attracted to Israel's faith, either because of the belief in one God, or because it included a lot of ethical guidelines. The Jews did not regard them as equals, nor were they the same as 'proselytes' (non-Jews who had converted to Judaism, been circumcised and kept its laws - like not eating pork, etc).

### Acts 14v8-17 the gospel for rural pagans

'Primal' or 'folk' religion is usually concerned with 'mundane' daily matters, like how to ensure that the crops don't fail, or how to recover from illness. Survival itself is hard enough, without worrying about 'higher' matters.

### Acts 17v16-34 the gospel for educated pagans

Greek philosophy developed in reaction to the excesses of Greek polytheistic religion. Homer wrote down most of the poems about the gods, and they could be seen as capricious, fickle and spoilt. Greek philosophers developed a religion that believed in a single God, although they believed him to be far removed from the world. Philosophy aimed to find God and to understand what true living was.

Each of the above speeches is very different, but there are common themes of principles (either stated or to be inferred). What are these?