

Hospitality

The challenge for any Christian in a non-Christian world

Introduction.

This presentation is born out of a long-term engagement with the work of L'abri fellowship. Looking back on these years I realise now that apologetic is not just giving answers to questions (or raising the right questions.) It is a lifestyle, a mentality, an atmosphere. In our L'abri work the table discussions, the coffee-times, the flowers on the table are all part of this. I found that hospitality is the best word to describe it. If taken in the wider sense, it is much more than preparing a lunch for 40 people.

1. Apology

In this presentation I am starting with the key text of the N.T. on apologetics: 1 Peter 3,15. Here we find in Greek the word “**apology**” ‘be prepared to give an apology’. The reading of the verses 14-17 shows that this is a matter of lifestyle. As Schaeffer always put it; our final and best apology is our lives.

2. Hospitality

Then I move to the word **hospitality** in the bible. In Hebrew 13:2 and other passages we look to the original meaning of the word. The main part of my presentation is the unfolding of the meaning of this word as it touches all my relationships. ‘To be hospitable’ is not the extra we bring up when a foreign guest enters our house. It must be an inner mentality of opening up and of presence. It is availability.

3. Relationships

This will be worked out in several **areas of our lives**. The relationship parents –children, man-woman, friends and foreigners. Is it easy? No. We talk about some of the problems in living a hospitable life. It turns out to be a calling not at all typical for woman alone, but for all disciples of Jesus, who more than anyone else had this great gift of a hospitable *heart*.

For further reading:

Edith Schaeffer: *L'abri story*.

Jean Vanier: *Community*.