

A person with a backpack is seen from behind, looking out over a vast mountain range. The scene is captured during sunrise or sunset, with a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The person is standing on a path or ledge, and the mountains in the distance are silhouetted against the bright sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

AVOIDING SYNCRETISM

Through Cultural Understanding

Understanding Syncretism

Syncretism is the combination of/synthesis of two or more competing religions or cultures.



Syncretism is a natural reaction for the unregenerate heart

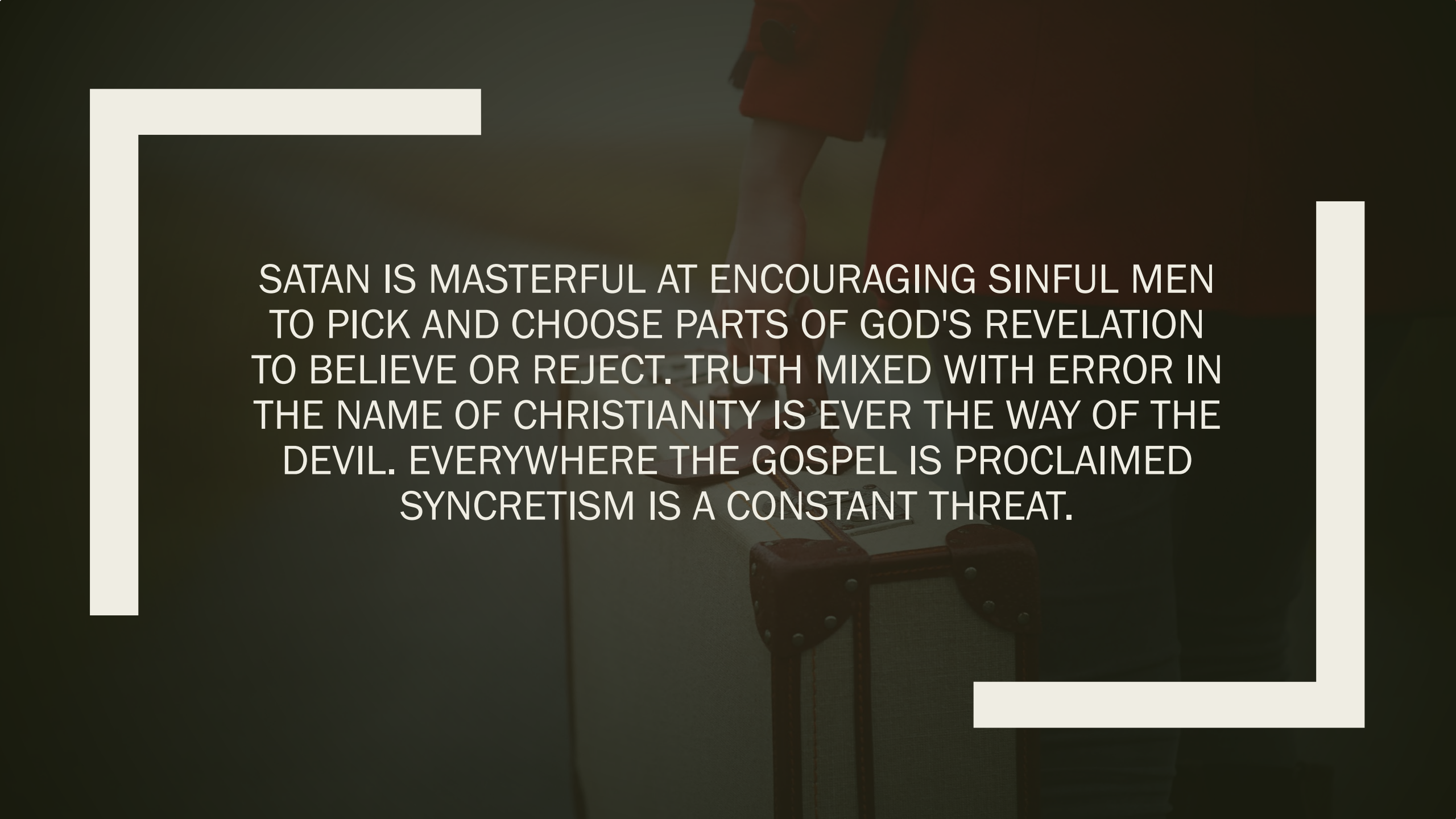
- Romans 3:10-11 tells us, “as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God’.”
- 1 Corinthians 2:14 adds, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”



SYNCRETISM IS NOT THE REJECTING OF ONE SYSTEM OF FAITH FOR ANOTHER, BUT THE ACCEPTING OF VARIOUS PARTS OF BOTH RELIGIONS AND THUS CREATING A NEW ONE.



Every culture is predisposed to altering the gospel to fit its worldview. Every unbeliever is sinfully predisposed to reject or alter the gospel.

A person wearing a red dress is standing at a podium, speaking into a microphone. The scene is dimly lit, with the person's face partially obscured by shadows. The background is dark and out of focus.

SATAN IS MASTERFUL AT ENCOURAGING SINFUL MEN
TO PICK AND CHOOSE PARTS OF GOD'S REVELATION
TO BELIEVE OR REJECT. TRUTH MIXED WITH ERROR IN
THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY IS EVER THE WAY OF THE
DEVIL. EVERYWHERE THE GOSPEL IS PROCLAIMED
SYNCRETISM IS A CONSTANT THREAT.

EXAMPLES OF
SYNCRETISM
FROM
AROUND THE
WORLD



Anyone who tells you to deny
yourself is from Satan.

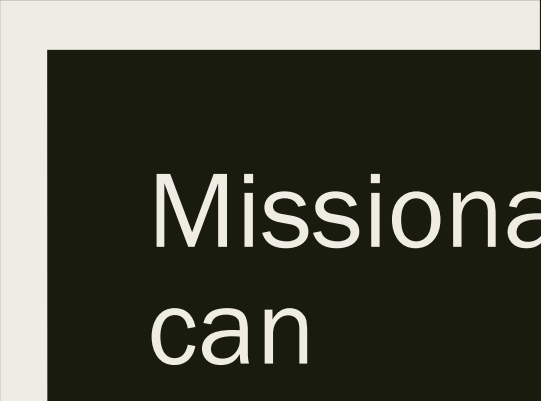
— Paula White —

Syncretism in the Old Testament



SYNCRETISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT





Missionaries
can
unintentionally
encourage
syncretism--

*because of their own
ignorance.*

Syncretism has plagued the history of missions.

- “In many places the pioneer missionaries *did not give sufficient attention to culture and worldview.* This resulted in **syncretized Christianity** in which Christianity became a veneer over the traditional religion of the people. This is often called ‘folk Christianity.’ In these situations the Christians identify themselves as Christians, but their **worldview remains unchanged.**”

-Developing a Strategy for Missions,

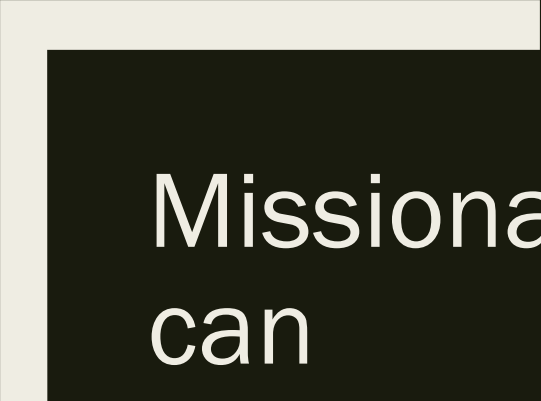
J.D. Payne and Mark Terry

Learning the language and culture well is non-negotiable!

Matt Rhodes in *No Shortcut to Success* said this:

“Where linguistic depth is absent, syncretism is often present. People are capable of an enormous amount of doublethink, and it’s not enough just to tell them to let go of old beliefs—we need the linguistic ability to learn and explain where those views differ from the Scriptures and why the Scriptures are more believable.”





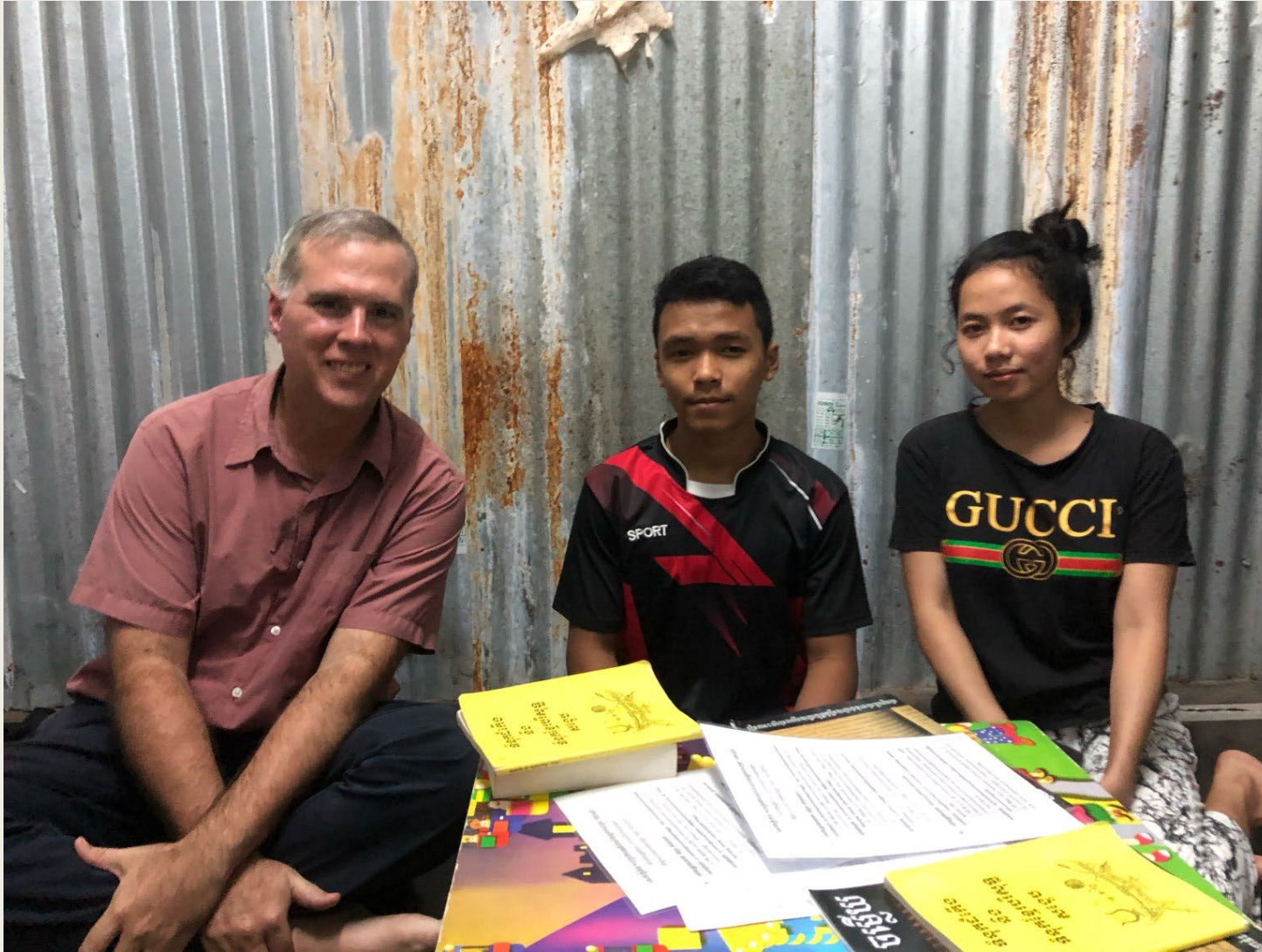
Missionaries
can
unintentionally
encourage
syncretism--

*because of their own
impatience.*

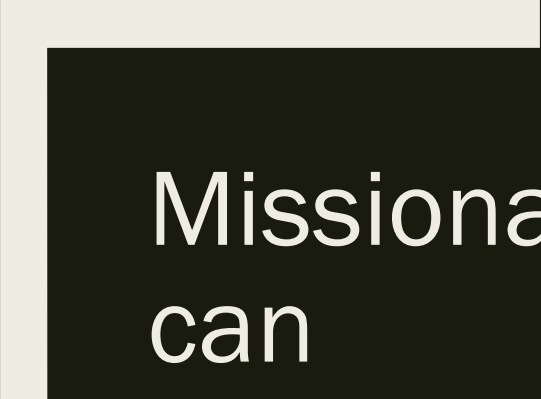


~~IMP~~PATIENT

WHY ARE
MISSIONARIES
TEMPTED TO
IMPATIENCE?



Patience and painstaking effort to clarify the Gospel are fundamental to proclaiming God's Word faithfully on the mission field.



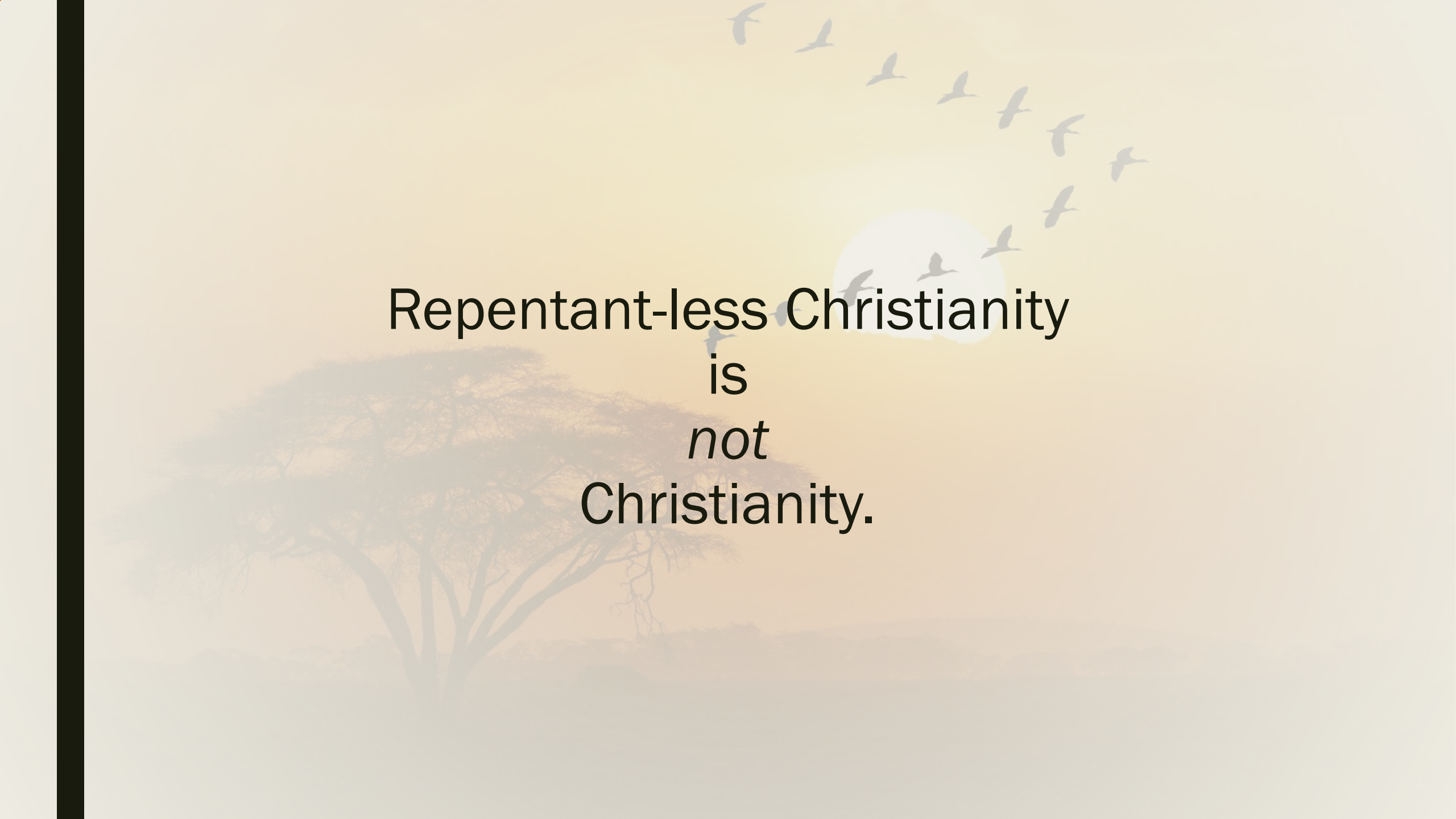
Missionaries
can
unintentionally
encourage
syncretism--

*By downplaying
repentance.*

[← BACK TO ARTICLE LIST](#)



SYNCRETISTS DON'T REPENT.



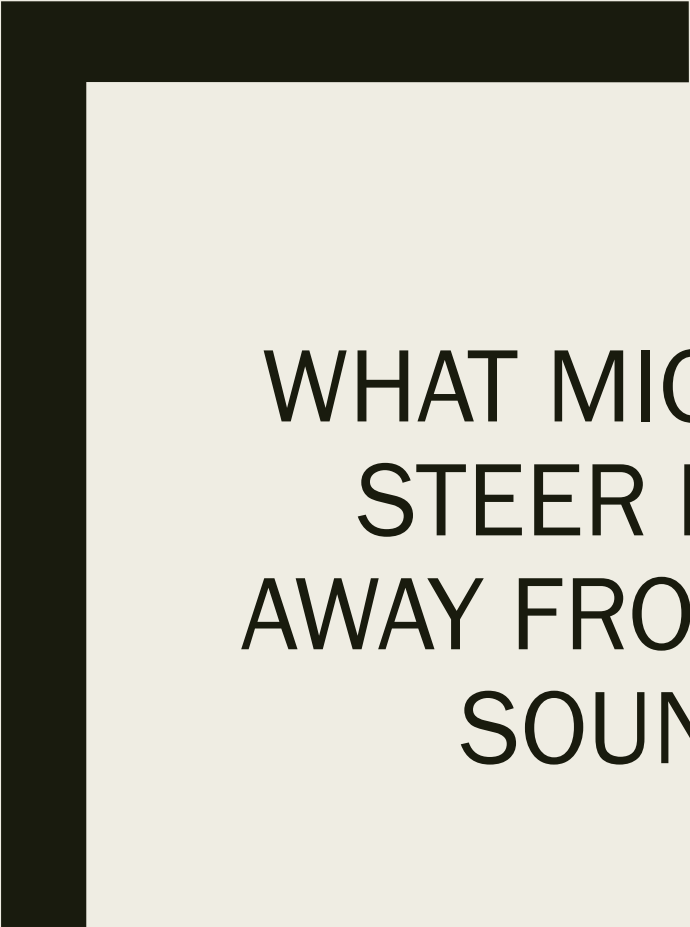
Repentant-less Christianity
is
not
Christianity.




Missionaries
can
unknowingly
stray from
teaching a
sound Gospel.

Galatians 1:6-10

- I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.



WHAT MIGHT TEMPT OR
STEER MISSIONARIES
AWAY FROM PREACHING
SOUND DOCTRINE?



WE NEED TO
HAVE THE FEAR
OF GOD ABOUT
SYNCRETISM.



A person in silhouette stands on a grassy hillside, looking out over a vast mountain range under a soft, hazy sky. The scene is framed by a white L-shaped graphic element in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

AVOID SYNCRETISM

GUARD THE GOSPEL!