

fearfully and wonderfully made: compliance

The compliance of skin enables it to adapt to its environment. It has the capacity 'to flow around whatever surface it contacts'. Dr Brand, after spending 'hundreds of hours researching the anatomy of living skin', explains the compliance of fat globules beneath the skin of the hand.

The fat globules which are unable to preserve their own shape are surrounded by interwoven collagen fibrils. Where stress occurs in the palm of the hand, for example grasping a hammer, fat cells alter their shape in response to the pressure. They become tightly gathered and enveloped by the firm collagen fibrils. The resulting tissue, constantly shifting, becomes compliant and takes on the shape of the handle of the hammer.

This biological property of compliance is mirrored spiritually; the author uses the analogy that a Christian represents a grasping hand. Do we become square to those things that are square and round to those things that are round? Through our compliant tissue, an object is not required

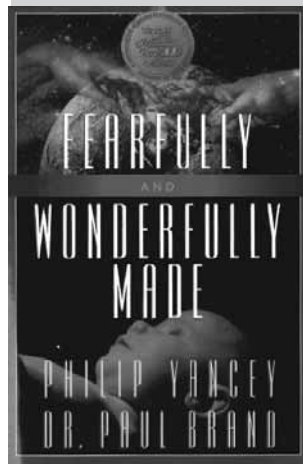
to fit the shape of our hand, as our hand adapts. The apostle Paul writes, '...I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some'. (1 Cor 9:22b)

We can often adopt a 'one size fits all' method in evangelism, when in fact each person is unique and at a different stage of his or her spiritual journey. Some seek detailed answers to the issue of suffering for instance, whereas others are encouraged by our simple testimonies. Perhaps we can wisely learn to adapt our ways of evangelising to be as compliant as the hand.

I was initially concerned that striving to be a 'compliant Christian' could put us at risk of compromising our standards. But, after prayer, I feel convicted that we cannot confuse compliance with compromise. Through the Scriptures we see how Paul accommodated Jews and Gentiles within the limits of God's Word and his Christian conscience; he would not transgress the standards of God:

To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I

This article is inspired by a chapter from Yancey P. Brand P. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. The authors expand on the New Testament analogy of the Body of Christ, linking it to the human body.



myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. (1 Cor 9:20b,21)

May we be led by the Holy Spirit in showing sensitivity to the needs of individuals in evangelism, such that they can reach an understanding of the gospel and come to know Christ.

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