

UNCIVILISED!

Intent of this script

- ✓ To study the meaning of “civilization”.
- ✓ To explode the myth that “western culture” or any other culture is superior to others.
- ✓ To put into question the “criteria” we use to decide whether a nation or an ethnic group is civilized or uncivilized.
- ✓ To realize that “culture” and “civilization” are relative words.
- ✓ To accept the fact that there are different cultures. All of them are unique, as we individuals are unique.
- ✓ To realize the arrogance and superiority-complex implied in our thinking that “our culture” is better than others.
- ✓ To approach peoples of other cultures with different customs and different views and values with humility and a desire to learn from them.

A Story

One day, a group of eager tourists discovered by chance a small island lost in the South Pacific. It was just an islet not yet “graced” by the blessings of civilization. Surprisingly, the Tourists found a sizable population of “savages” there! Next day, in the world press, radio and T.V. the following news was broadcast all over the world.

UNCIVILISED SAVAGES FOUND EVEN NOW IN THE XXI CENTURY”!

A group of tourists chanced to discover a new island in the South Pacific. The inhabitants there, seem to be completely uncivilized.

- They drink water directly from their pure crystal springs and rivulets.
- They refused to drink beer, beverages, liqueurs and carbonated drinks offered to them.
- They eat fresh fruits from their trees and fields, not the sterilized and pre-cooked food we eat.
- They live in small villages and hamlets instead of big cities.
- They walk on foot. They do not use planes, motor cars or motorbikes.
- They do not even know of the existence of pushbikes!
- They talk in a friendly and natural way with one another.
- They do not use phones, Dictaphones, radios, telex, T.V sets, computers, mobiles, or video tapes.
- They are loving and affectionate. They have time for one another.
- Their children do not go to school or college. They learn from living
- They spend most of their time playing, frolicking and enjoying life!
- They even believe in God and pray to Him in their needs.
- They believe in a life after death.
- They are relaxed, and calm. They sleep soundly without sleeping pills or sedatives.
- No one knows what an E.C.G. a C.T Scan or an M. R.I. means.
- Nobody has even gone to a psychiatrist!
- They are healthy and hearty. They do not suffer heart attacks, high blood pressure or strokes.
- Among them there are no very neither rich, nor very poor persons”, “haves” and “have-nots”.
- There are neither employees nor employers among them. All are self employed.
- And wonder of wonders! Couples enjoy their love and their sex, without extravagances, inferiority complexes, fears, and feelings of inadequacy!

It is unbelievable that such underdeveloped, uncivilized and backward people could be found even today at the beginning of the XXI Century!”

IDEAS AND REFLECTIONS ARISING FROM THE STORY

- The tourists of the story were surprised to find people different from themselves.
- Since the newly-discovered people were different from them, the tourists branded them without further ado, as “savages”, “uncivilized”, and “under-developed”.
- Were they really so? What were the “criteria” the tourists used to pass judgment on the newly found people?
- Are we not like the tourists of the story, when we judge peoples of different cultures, tastes, beliefs values and customs? Give examples.
- There are “different” cultures and civilizations. True! But, how can we say that some cultures are superior or inferior to others. What are the criteria we use to pass judgment on them?. Can you mention them?
- Culture has a “functional” role within a particular environment and group of people. The function of “culture” is to enable the people of a particular group and environment to live meaningful and satisfying lives.
- In as much as a culture fulfils this role for a particular group of people it is the “best” culture for that group.
- Can a unicultural pattern - “western” or any other - be functionally the best for all the peoples of the world? What about the millions of people living in India? Would a unicultural pattern be the best for all? Why?
- Should the various cultures of the tribals and aborigines all over the world, and of the desert-dwellers, and of the inhabitants of the Polar Regions be fostered or done away with? Why?
- The West, rich and technologically powerful, consciously or unconsciously, exports and imposes its culture and “civilization” to all peoples of the world. Is this trend a healthy or an unhealthy one? Is it not rather an open or hidden exploitative cultural colonialism across the world?
- Each country, each group of people has to find out what is the best culture for itself.
- It’s regretful, however, that the less economically developed countries – though not necessarily uncivilized—eagerly ape the customs and life-styles of the affluent countries thus repudiating their own rich cultural heritages..
- In our present world the name of the game is “money”. The wealthiest societies of our world, the so-called “affluent societies” are ruled by “The mammon of money” and in turn they try to rule the world to their advantage,
- The poor nations of the world have bartered away what nature and art have so prodigally endowed them with, to the rich nations, for a mess of pottage!
- In today’s world it is money that counts, not culture, nor the things of the spirit – religion, poetry, language, or art!
- Today the only “criterion” to judge how “civilized” a country is, is “wealth”. The country with the largest pile of paper currency and coins to shuffle in the stock market is considered the most civilized even if its moral and spiritual values and artistic sensibilities are thoroughly debased.

- The so-called “modern civilization” has robbed most of the peoples of the world of their self-identity, their wholesome joys, the pride in their historic past, their national genius, the priceless treasures of their language and pristine culture, nay, their very souls.
- Culture is meant to bring true joy to people. Where does true joy lie? In wealth and material progress only? No! In being human, in finding meaning in life, in enjoying social intercourse, in friendliness, in self-acceptance, and in trusting and loving God. Here in lies true joy.
- What joy “modern civilization” has to offer to the people branded as “savages”? Cosmetics, cokes, cookies, transistors, videos, scotch, precooked meals, tabloid fiction, snows, mobiles, speed boats, tranquilizers????
- Modern “civilization” is a Procrustean bed. Every man, every group of people, every nation is forced to fit into it, never mind the damage, the loss and harm done to them.
- The heart of modern civilization is the machine. It symbolizes money, greed, status and power.
- There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the machine. But it should not rule the life of man. It is man who should use the machine in a manner that will bring real meaning, joy and satisfaction into his life.
- Instead of being the good, dynamic and progressive force it had set out to be, modern civilization has turned into a Frankenstein, a monster devouring its makers and unfortunately also the cultures and civilizations that cross its path.

N.T. TEXTS IN KEEPING WITH THE IDEAS OF THE PARABLE

Note

It is not possible to find texts directly bearing on the topic of the parable. Still, we do find texts in keeping with the key ideas of the parable, such as those indicated below.

Mt 5/1-11	The Beatitudes. True happiness.
Mt 6/24-37	God and possessions. Do not worry. Be contented.
Mt 7/1-6	Judging others. No group of men can judge another.
Mt 13/53-58	Jesus is rejected at Nazareth. He was judged inferior. He wasn't educated.
Mt 23/1-28	Jesus condemns the Pharisees. They thought themselves better...because of money and learning/
Mk 10/17-27	Money made the rich man lose his happiness.
Lik 4/1-13	Jesus was also tempted to be rich, popular and powerful.
Lk 12/13-21	The rich fool. “The worth of a man (this could be said also of a Country or civilization) is not in what he owns, but in what he is.”
Lk 12/32-34	Riches in heaven.
Jas 1/9-11	Poverty and riches.
Jas 2/1-7	Prejudice.
Jas 4/1-6	Friendship with the world.