

EVANGELISM:

how the whole church speaks of Jesus

Week 5 - A Culture of Evangelism

How do you define a culture? It “has to do with shared ideas, a shared language, and a shared understanding of how to act” (47). Over the next two weeks, we will look at ten aspects of a culture of evangelism:

#1: A culture motivated by love for Jesus and His gospel (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

“Evangelism often feels like pushing a ball uphill. But when I’m with people whose motivation for evangelism springs from a love for Jesus, the perception of evangelism changes...The need to badger people to share their faith evaporates. It becomes something we long to do. It becomes a way of thinking” (48).

Question—Could a lack of desire to evangelize in your life actually stem from a lack of love for Jesus?

#2: A culture that is confident in the gospel (Romans 1:16)

What happens when the gospel fails to get people to come to your church? What happens when the simple message of Jesus’ death and resurrection isn’t getting people dunked in the baptistery? The temptation is to trade “confidence in the gospel for confidence in techniques, personalities, or entertainment gimmicks” (49). It’s even harder when it seems some churches are having “success” this way.

Question—What does this mean: “What you win them with is what you win them to”?

“I yearn for a culture of evangelism in which we build one another up and remind one another to put aside worldly practices and techniques of evangelism, placing our full confidence in the power of the plain message of the gospel.” (49-50)

#3: A culture that understands the danger of entertainment (Ezekiel 33:30-32)

“To get people to show up for a church service today, we need only to post a titillating topic on social media, put together a rousing musical performance, or find a charismatic speaker who pulls at people’s heartstrings—extra points if he’s funny. It’s not hard. But beware, God warned Ezekiel, and he warns us today: you may get a crowd through such methods, but you won’t get their hearts.” (50-51)

#4: A culture that sees people clearly (2 Cor. 5:16a)

The world categorizes people by color, sex, class, education level, etc. As Christians, we push past stereotypes seeing people with new eyes: they are individuals with real hurts, real sins, real dreams, real loves.

The author tells a story about a new neighbor who smoked regularly in his front yard. One day, his six-year-old son confronted the man, “Smoking is dangerous—you need to quit...pray to Jesus, and he’ll help you stop.” The author was embarrassed, assuming his neighbor would be offended. Instead, his response: “You know what? You’re probably right, you’re probably right.” No one is a stereotype!

#5: A culture that pulls together as one (Philippians 1:3-5)

“I long to share my faith in a context of a church that understands what I’m doing and is pulling with me. In such a culture, when I bring a friend to church, others don’t assume that person is a Christian.

They are not shocked when I introduce someone and say, ‘This is Bob, and he’s checking out Christianity.’ Instead, they respond, ‘I’m so glad you are here. I was in the same place a couple of years ago, and I’d love to hear about it. What are you thinking through?’” (54)