

Six Key Texts on Cultural Engagement

In this session, we examine six key passages on cultural engagement in a context where a theology of engagement is lacking and where some have defined the Cultural War in ways that are not as biblical as it should be. These texts emphasize the spiritual dimensions of the battle, not forgetting how God came to us, the importance of tone, the indispensability of the Gospel as hope, the challenge-invitation nature of the Gospel, and a call to be faithful, leaving heart change to God.

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I. The Context

1. Telstar (1962): How our times have changed: global connection (Both bigger and smaller)
2. We have suffered the loss of the Judeo-Christian Net
3. We have to engage with the reality of Pluralism: Coping with Pluralism means being more aware of it and more engaged with it.
4. We need to redefine the Culture War more biblically and missionally.
5. Some Initial Questions: How well do you know people who are really different and from a different background? How well does the church function as a neighbor?

II. Six Key Texts

1. The Spiritual Battle: Ephesians 6:10-18: “For our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness.”

A. Application: The battle metaphor changed: the GIA- God's Intelligence agency.

B. Application: People are not the enemy but the goal.

C. Application: The battle is spiritual (look at the armor elements-lived out faith). It requires spiritual resources, not ideology or politics, or circumstances. (And the enemy works incognito.)

2. Hope with a Proper Tone: 1 Peter 3:13-18: Hope, Gentleness and Respect, Push Back Will Come, Never Forget Where You Came From.

3. The Speech: Colossians 4:5-6: Opportunities, ALWAYS Be Gracious. Tone Matters.

4. Actions and the Scope: Galatians 6:10: Do good to ALL, especially those of the faith. Tone Matters.

5. The Assignment and Goal: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21: Ambassadors of Reconciliation and the Issue of Tone. Three Key NT Words To Summarize Faith: Hope, Reconciliation, Power (Enablement)

A. Application: How ambassadors work.

B. Application: Our passport is the Kingdom. Note the tone. We beg/implore you to be reconciled.

6. The Summary: 2 Timothy 2:22-26: Kind, patient, gentle, escape the devils' trap. Our call is to be faithful in how we live. Stay in your pay grade.

III. Summary

Suggested Readings:

The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Six Democracies 3rd Edition, by J. Christopher Soper (Author), Kevin R. den Dulk (Author), Stephen V. Monsma (Author). Rowman & Littlefield, 2017

Cultural Intelligence: Living for God in a Diverse, Pluralistic World by Darrell L. Bock (Author) B & H Academic. 2020

The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, by Lesslie Newbigin (Author) Eerdmans. 1989