**Cultural Apologetics:**

**Engaging Values and Worldviews in Popular Culture**

Each day we encounter a pluralism of themes, stories and arguments in movies, television series, and other products of popular culture. Many of these messages influence how biblical truth is perceived, both outside and within the church, and thus with implications both for evangelism and discipleship. Therefore, we need to be equipped to engage such media messages with sensitivity and integrity, both as media narratives and at the underlying levels of values and worldviews. This cultural apologetic task includes the art of double listening, where “we are called to listen both to the Word of God, and to today’s world, in order to relate the one to the other” (John Stott). This workshop will include some illuminating case studies and will equip pastors and parents for constructive conversations with their youth.

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1. **Why Cultural Apologetics?**
2. Popular Culture as a Pulpit  
   * 1. “*No story exists neutrally, as raw entertainment without reference to cultural beliefs and values.”*

(Brian Godawa)

* + 1. *“The greater the artistic expression, the more important it is to consciously bring it and its worldview under the judgment of Christ and the Bible.”*

(Francis Schaeffer)

* + 1. “The term “cultural apologetics”has been used to refer to systematic efforts to advance the plausibility of Christian claims in light of the messages communicated through dominant cultural institutions, including films, popular music, literature, art, and the mass media.”

(Ken Myers)

1. Cultural Apologetics as a Missionary Engagement  
   * 1. What would be involved in a missionary encounter between the gospel and this whole way of perceiving, thinking, and living that we call “modern Western culture”?

(Lesslie Newbigin)

* + 1. *Meanwhile, the harsh reality is that most Americans, including most of those in our churches, have been so shaped by the popular culture that no thoughtful preacher can afford to ignore the impact.*

(D.A. Carson)

* + 1. *Many of the background assumptions that our culture presses on us about Christianity make it seem so implausible. These assumptions are not presented to us explicitly by argument. Rather, they are absorbed through the stories and themes of entertainment and social media. They are assumed to be ‘simply the way things are’. They are so strong that even many Christian believers, perhaps secretly at first, find their faith becoming less and less real in their minds and hearts.*

(Tim Keller)

1. **Double Listening**
2. The Two Voices
   * 1. *Double listening . . . is the faculty of listening to two voices at the same time, the voice of God through Scripture and the voices of men and women around us.*

(John Stott)

* + 1. Double refusal:

*We refuse to become either so absorbed in the Word, that we escape into it and fail to let it confront the world, or so absorbed in the world, that we conform to it and fail to subject it to the judgment of the Word.*

(John Stott)

* + 1. Listening to the Word and to the World  
       Affirming points of contact – bridgebuilding

Challenging points of tension – towards change

1. A Key Tool
   * 1. *“We need to learn to use the aesthetic currency of our lives (music, story, dance, painting, cooking, tweeting (!!), and so on) in our apologetic efforts. There are a daily million signposts for God—all we need to do is learn to see them ourselves and then point them out in creative ways to others.”*

(Paul Gould)

* + 1. The Worldview Level – illustrated by an iceberg
       - What´s being said and done
       - View of ethical values
       - View of humanity
       - View of reality
       - View of faith (trust/search for meaning)

1. **Some Cases – How Do We Respond?**

The case studies will include recent significant media stories such as *Soul* and *Shame*.

1. **Some Final Reflections**

**Q & A / Discussion**

***Suggested Readings:***

Stott, John. *The Contemporary Christian: An urgent plea for double listening* (InterVarsity Press, 1992)

Schaeffer, Francis A. *Art and the Bible* (InterVarsity Press 1973)

Dahle, Margunn Serigstad. *Understanding the Tweens Media World* (FOCL Talk 2014)<http://foclonline.org/talk/understanding-tweens-media-world>

Dahle, Margunn Serigstad. *Media Engagement in Youth Ministry: The Disney Universe as a Case Study* <https://foclonline.org/talk/media-engagement-youth-ministry-disney-universe-case-study>

The Barna Group. *Making Space for the Millennials: A Blue Print for Your Culture, Ministry, Leadership and Facilities* (Barna Group, 2014)

Strange, Daniel. *Plugged In. Connecting your faith with what you watch, read, and play* (The Good Book Company, 2019)

Muller, Walt. *Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture: Bridging Teen Worldviews and Christian Truth* (InterVarsity Press, 2006)

Takacs, Stacy. *Interrogating Popular Culture: Key Questions* (Routledge, 2015)

Turnau, Ted. *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (P & R Publishing, 2012)

Ministry-To-Children: *Childrens Ministry Statistics 2019*  
 <https://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Childrens-Ministry-Statistics-2019.pdf>