

The Church & Her Impact on Culture

John 17

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / June 22, 2014

I. God is a sending God!

A. God sent Christ into the world to accomplish His purposes.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ **whom You have sent**.

John 17:8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; **and they have believed that You sent Me**.

John 17:21 ...that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, **that the world may believe that You sent Me**.

B. Just as God sent Jesus into the world, we are sent by Christ into the world to accomplish His purposes.

John 17:18 As You sent Me into the world, **I also have sent them into the world**.

II. God is a sanctifying God!

John 17:17 **Sanctify them** by Your truth. Your word is truth.

John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, **that they also may be sanctified by the truth**.

God's sending & sanctifying of His people go hand-in-hand. We're not sent into the world to be like them, nor have we been separated from the world so that we have no impact. Instead, Christians are to be impact culture by being gloriously different from the culture in which we live.

John 17:13-19 ¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them **because they are not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ **I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.** ¹⁶ **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.** ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Rom. 12:2 **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Rom. 8:29 For whom He foreknew, **He also predestined *to be conformed to the image of His Son***, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

III. As Christians, we need to be careful to avoid two unbiblical extremes that will cause us to be ineffective in culture.

A. syncretism: the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought

Although it appears well-intended, the result of attempting to make Christianity more palatable by combining it with secular culture always results in unbiblical compromise that inevitably is more pagan than it is Christian.

B. separatism: the advocacy or practice of separation of a certain group of people from a larger body on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender

Although it appears to have a holy zeal, Christians who seek to separate themselves from the culture in which they live don't live up to our God-given command to evangelize and make disciples.

IV. Using a biblical worldview, we have three ways in which we can interact with the world in which we've been sent into.

A. Receive – as Christians, we can receive these things “as is.”

- technology
- food
- _____

B. Reject – as Christians, we reject these things “as is,” seeing no redeemable, God-honoring potential in them.

- pornography
- illegal drug use
- abortion
- drunkenness
- fornication
- _____

C. Redeem – although we may not be able to receive them “as is,” we don’t necessarily need to reject them. We can use them in a redemptive way to honor God and impact culture.

- sexuality—we don’t adhere to the standards of our world, but redeem it by honoring God with it according to the Scriptures.
- technology—we don’t use the internet as the world does, but use it as a tool for God-honoring purposes.
- social media
- music
- _____

Homework:

1. Prayerfully consider and ask those who know you well what your “default settings” are. In other words, what’s your natural tendency when it comes to interacting with our culture?
 - Do you tend to syncretize?
 - Do you lean more towards separatism?
 - Do you tend to “receive” things you should reject?
 - Do you “reject” things you could redeem?

2. Once you’ve identified your “default settings,” consider what steps you can take to move in the right direction in order to have more effective interactions with culture in a way that pleases God.