

25 January 2015

RPC Christian Education Series: Christ and Culture

Week 3: Our relationship to the culture

Intro and Review

What happens when our culture views Christianity as only pertaining to salvation but not pertaining to the whole cosmos?

I. Church history and culture: one really long “DTR”

A. Think of some ways you’ve heard (or perhaps you’ve said) that you “should” relate to culture. How would you describe them?

“I wonder what we Christians are known for in the world outside our churches. Are we known as critics, consumers, copiers, condemners of culture? I’m afraid so. Why aren’t we known as cultivators—people who tend and nourish what is best in human culture, who do the hard and painstaking work to preserve the best of what people before us have done? Why aren’t we known as creators—people who dare to think and do something that has never been thought or done before, something that makes the world more welcoming and thrilling and beautiful?”—Andy Crouch, Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling.

B. What are some biblical examples of God’s people and their relationship to the culture and world around them?

C. Read **1 Peter 2:9-17**

II. Five paradigms of relationship to the culture according to Niehbur

A. Christ against culture--“*uncompromisingly affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects the culture’s claims to loyalty.*”

Examples:

Strengths:

Limitations:

B. Christ of culture--*“adopted by people who hail Jesus as the Messiah of their society, the one who fulfills its best hopes and aspirations...they seek to maintain community with all believers. Yet they seem equally at home in the community of culture.”*

Examples:

Strengths:

Limitations:

C. Christ above culture synthesis—*“Where this conviction rules, Christ and the world cannot be simply opposed to each other...[the culture and the whole world] is good and rightly ordered by the One to whom Jesus Christ is obedient...it cannot simply be regarded as the realm of godlessness.”*

Examples:

Strengths:

Limitations:

D. Christ and culture in paradox--*“Human culture is corrupt; and it includes all human work, not simply the achievements of men outside the church but also those in it, not only philosophy so far as it is human achievement but theology also.”*

Examples:

Strengths:

Limitations:

E. Christ transforming/converting culture—*“The men who offer what we are calling the conversionist answer to the problem of Christ and culture evidently belong to the great central tradition of the church...they do not take the road of exclusive Christianity into isolation from civilization, or reject its institutions with Tolstoyan bitterness...[theirs is] a more positive and hopeful attitude toward culture.”*

Examples:

Strengths:

Limitations:

III. Application: know your redemptive history

- A. Creation
- B. Fall
- C. Redemption
- D. Restoration