

WHAT IS A CROSS-CULTURAL CHURCH?

Written by Calvin Fox

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"Just because your church looks diverse doesn't mean it is diverse." Observations and lessons shared by Ed Stetzer in CT

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2013/december/thinking-through-multicultural-church.html>

Some good observations here, but as in most articles on this subject that I have read, there is no actual definition of "Culture". The most glaring omission is failure to mention Christian Culture. Here is my understanding of what that is-

What is Culture?

Popular Culture has to do with preferences and tastes in manners, food, clothing, music, decorative arts, customs and traditions such as Rites of Passage (coming of age rituals, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays). There is, and should be, a lot of diversity in all of these matters. Although they can be very important to people, all such matters are peripheral to what is the core of culture.

Essential cultural consists of those core beliefs, morals and values that are shared by any group of people and bind them together as an identifiable body. These are not peripheral matters.

Christians as individuals may enjoy and value and accommodate a diversity of peripheral cultural matters, but we are joined together as a recognizable social group by core beliefs, morals and values which are Biblical.

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7 Basics of Biblical Culture

Life- Core Christian Culture is very pro-life in every sense.

Marriage- Defined as a life-long, committed relationship between a man and a woman is very highly valued. Divorce is disapproved. Virginity before Marriage and Marital Fidelity during it are greatly valued.

Family- Parenthood and children are desired and valued; abortion is strongly disapproved; extended, cross generational families are the norm; children honor (respect) their parents and the elderly are respected by all.

Individual Responsibility- individual persons are accountable and responsible to God, themselves, their family and community for their decisions and actions

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Work- everyone who is able works throughout life for the welfare of the family and community. Social, Economic and Political Freedom to work is highly valued.

Biblical Welfare- People who become destitute due to circumstances beyond their control are the responsibility- first, of their extended family and then, of the Church and then, of the local community

Biblical Religion- Christian Culture, above all, is Christian. It is centered on the worship and service of the God who has revealed Himself in Creation, Scripture and, particularly, in Jesus Christ. People who share Christian Culture see themselves as the Covenant People of God. This is their primary identity, no matter what their ethnic origin, first language or country of origin may be.

The above seven distinctives are the essential or core marks of Christian Culture. In practice, American Christians often disagree about the peripherals, as well as mix them in with the essentials.

It is important that the peripherals do not overcome or undermine the essentials. In practice that often happens.

An important task for the Church is to help Christians understand the difference between the two and how they relate.

In this time when Multiculturalism is so highly valued by many, it is very important that Christians understand what a Biblical Core Culture is and unashamedly commit to develop and

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maintain all its essentials as outlined above.