

Engaging Culture

BO WHITE

ALL SAINTS CHURCH



Academic Background



COVENANT
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
URBANA - CHAMPAIGN



USC University of
Southern California



Where I have lived....





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Psalm 145 tells us....

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

one generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all that he has made.

On the Psalms: NT Wright

“Part of the strange work of the Psalms is to draw the terror and shame of all the ages together to a point where it becomes intense and unbearable, turning itself into a great scream of pain, the pain of Israel, the pain of Adam and Eve, the pain that shouts out, in the most paradoxical act of worship, to ask why God has abandoned it. And then of course the Psalms tell the story of strange vindication, of dramatic reversal, of wondrous rescue, comfort, and restoration.”

— N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms*

On the Psalms: Tim Keller

“Psalms, then, are not just a matchless primer of teaching but a medicine chest for the heart and the best possible guide for practical living.”

— Timothy Keller, *Songs of Jesus*

To engage a culture....

We are to commend the works of God to the next generation....the Psalms are instructive on this....

Yet....

A. What is culture?

B. How to commend the works of the triune God in a digital, diverse, and divided culture?

C. Your mission....should you choose to accept it....

What is culture and what to do?

PART ONE AND TWO



DA Carson

“My point, then, is that in the real world, for all the difficulties there are in communication from person to person and from culture to culture, we still expect people to say more or less what they mean (and if they don’t, we chide them for it), and we expect mature people to understand what others say, and represent it fairly. The understanding is doubtless never absolutely exhaustive and perfect, but that does not mean the only alternative is to dissociate text from speaker, and then locate all meaning in the reader or hearer.” — DA Carson, *the Gagging of God*.



CULTURE DEFINED

- A shared pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, and behaviors that distinguish one group from another
- “The way we do things around here”

Cultural Intelligence

“Based on the research conducted across the world, there are four capabilities that consistently emerge among those who can be described as culturally intelligent.”

- **CQ Drive** is your level of interest, persistence, and confidence during multicultural interactions.
- **CQ Knowledge** is your understanding about how cultures are similar and different.
- **CQ Strategy** is your awareness and ability to plan for multicultural interactions.
- **CQ Action** is your ability to adapt when relating and working in multicultural contexts

CQ Drive

Level of interest in other cultures, persistence, confidence interacting with other cultures.....

“According to a Pew Research study in 2021, nearly one in five Americans believes the Constitution to be a divinely inspired document.”

“For the first time in the eight decades that Gallup has tracked American religious membership, more adults in the United States do not attend church than attend church.” —Jim Davis, the Great DeChurching

CQ Knowledge

.... your understanding about how cultures are similar and different.

This is probably our default mentality when we think of cultural interactions. What should we think or know about another country, culture, or group of people different than us?

“Understanding why some groups are routinely punctual and others aren’t begins with understanding. I don’t have to agree with your behavior, but I must first understand what’s behind it instead of writing you off as weird, ignorant, or brainwashed. This comes from talking to people from different backgrounds and by consulting evidence-based resources that provide knowledge about different figured worlds.”---David Livermore

CQ Strategy

.... your awareness and ability to plan for multicultural interactions

“The commands to love our neighbor, to do all our work out of a Christian worldview, and to be salt and light, working for the common good of all city residents—mean Christians will of necessity be doing cultural renewal. People who say, “The church should not seek any impact on culture” should be asked, “should Christians have not worked to abolish slavery?” That was a response to God’s command to love our neighbor, but it also brought massive social change.

Nevertheless, looking back over the texts I am struck by the simple fact that cultural change is always a by-product, not the main goal. The main goal is always *loving service*. If we love and serve our neighbors, city, and Lord, it will definitely mean social changes....” —Tim Keller

Do we have a strategy for *loving service* to a different culture or within a different culture?

CQ Action

...your ability to adapt or to be understood when relating and working in multicultural contexts

“During our first year of marriage, Linda and I were both in graduate school and working full-time jobs. There were few hours when our schedules overlapped. My idea of a good way to use the weekend was to get the house organized and cleaned for another week. Linda’s idea was to do something fun together. I quickly learned that my good intentions didn’t translate, another mantra I repeat when talking about cultural intelligence.”—David Livermore

Good intentions do not translate well....

A word on Discipleship

“Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.”

— James K.A. Smith

Luke 9:1-9. An Exercise

CQ Drive

CQ Knowledge

CQ Strategy

CQ Action

Can you see Jesus sending himself out?



On our world....

Digital:

“Over the course of many decades, we found ways to protect children while mostly allowing adults to do what they want. Then quite suddenly, we created a virtual world where adults could indulge any momentary whim, but **children were left nearly defenseless**. As evidence mounts that phone-based childhood is making our children mentally unhealthy, socially isolated, and deeply unhappy, are we okay with that trade-off? **Or will we eventually realize, as we did in the 20th century, that we sometimes need to protect children from harm even when it inconveniences adults?”**

—Jonathan Haidt

On our world....

Diversity:

About 40 million Americans have left churches and other religious institutions in the last 25 years.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, blacks, Asians, Hispanics and other racial minorities will make up a majority of the population by the year 2050.

- **Children of color** are taking up an increasingly larger share of the total child population. These children grew from representing just **26% of all kids in 1980 to 53% in 2020**.
- **The total headcount for children of color grew in 46 states** plus the District of Columbia, and this statistic grew fastest in three states — Texas, Florida and Washington.

On our world....

Divided

There's an increasing number of people who say that they are evangelical, yet they go to church less than once a year. Or, there's a growing phenomenon of non-Christian faith groups like Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists who will tell survey administrators that they too are evangelicals. As I have shown, it's pretty easy to predict why this is happening—it's much more prominent among Republican non-Christians than among Democrats. Religion is not about a sense of the Divine; it's about what tribe you associate with and what kind of cable news you consume.—Ryan Burge, professor.

A word on Discipleship

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— James K.A. Smith

our Mission....

CONCLUSION



All 4 matter

What is CQ Knowledge without CQ Drive?

What is CQ Knowledge without CQ Action?

When we commend the works of God, we are not just passing along doctrine....we are passing forward a way of life.

Unpacking what we Bring Home

Essentials: What do we now keep?

Habits: What should we now change?

Ideas: What do we now believe?

Images: What do we now see?

Partners: Who do we now trust?

In closing...Psalm 37

Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

³ Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:

⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

...Psalm 37.

⁷ Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹ For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

¹⁰ A little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look for them, they will not be found.

¹¹ But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy peace and prosperity.

¹² The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;

¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he knows their day is coming.

Thank you

Bo White, Ed.D.

221bwhite@gmail.com