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Faithfully Engaging Public Thought in Scotland

How Should Christians Engage with Contemporary Society?

Learning from the past for ministry in present day Scotland

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Introduction

Human temperaments – the instinctive ways that we see the world and engage with other people – are fascinating. Some people are introverts, others are extroverts. Some people are optimists, others are pessimists; to say nothing of those with creative, technical, or sporty dispositions. It's common to find a variety of temperaments in a family (sometimes it is astonishing how such different children came from the same set of parents) and in a team (sometimes it is a mystery how such different characters can work well together without tearing one another apart). Likewise, we can observe various temperaments reflected in the differing ways Christians and Churches engage with contemporary society and public issues.

Back in 1951 Richard Niebuhr published the classic [*Christ and Culture*](#), looking back over history and categorizing these temperaments as:

1. “Christ Against Culture”
The *isolationist* temperament, exemplified by the Anabaptists.
2. “Christ Of Culture”
The *accommodationist* temperament, exemplified by the Liberal Protestants.
3. “Christ Above Culture”
The *synthesist* temperament, exemplified by the Roman Catholics.
4. “Christ and Culture in Paradox”
The *dualist* temperament, exemplified by the Lutheran Two Kingdoms.
5. “Christ the Transformer of Culture”
The *conversionist* temperament, exemplified by the Calvinistic Reformers.

Although Donald Carson ([*Christ and Culture Revisited*](#)) and Timothy Keller ([*Center Church*](#)) have argued that there's an appropriate time and season for each of these five temperaments – seeing each corresponding to a moment in the unfolding of the Bible's Creation-Fall-Israel-Christ-Church-Recreation storyline. Nevertheless, it is widely acknowledged that Niebuhr favoured the last of these approaches – and structures the book to guide readers towards the conversionist temperament. Niebuhr's temperament of seeking to Christianise society may have fitted comfortably into a cultural context where Christendom was still in the ascendancy. At that time the Christian church and worldview enjoyed a great deal of cultural influence and political power in North American society. Even those who were not believing Christians or regular church attenders shared the ideas, values, assumptions of a Christian worldview, because they were part of the cultural air everyone breathed. However, Craig Carter ([*Retinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective*](#)) argues that we have reached the point that Niebuhr's temperament may no longer serve us well.

That's because after Niebuhr's time things have dramatically changed in many parts of the western world. For instance, rapidly Scotland has become a secular nation - having witnessed both a [collapse in church attendance](#) and [Christian cultural influence](#) since the 1950s. We are no longer John Knox's 'land of the book'; we are now a post-Christian nation. In fact, Scotland is not alone on that journey. The entire western world is in the midst of a convulsion, transitioning from a Christian worldview to an array of post-Christian worldviews bound loosely together by their common commitment to expressive individualism. Therefore, this essay contends that this transition to a post-Christendom era requires fresh thinking about the relationship of Christ and Culture, Christians and the public square.

How we have arrived here is a story that has been told at great length by scholars like Charles Taylor ([*A Secular Age*](#)), Alasdair MacIntyre ([*After Virtue*](#)), Carl Trueman ([*The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*](#)), or Philip Reiff ([*My Life Among the Deathworks*](#)). Perhaps most memorably the Australian missiologist Stephen McAlpine has described it as a transition from Christians being

seen as “the good guys” to becoming “the bad guys” ([Being The Bad Guys](#)). McAlpine contends that missiologists at the turn of the millennium, when pondering the hopeful possibilities for the church in a postmodern world, underestimated the cultural revolution it represented. We were not returning to a pre-Christian era, where the gospel would be welcomed afresh by the pagans in a neutral public square or secular marketplace of ideas. Instead, we have moved into an uncomfortable post-Christian era dominated by a new adolescent religion which is hostile to the parent Christian worldview that went before it.

One Niebuhr’s contemporaries, C.S. Lewis, was prophetic when he warned:

“When grave persons express their fear that England is relapsing into Paganism, I am tempted to reply: ‘Would that she were.’ ... For a Pagan, history shows, is a man eminently convertible to Christianity. He is essentially the pre-Christian, or sub-Christian, religious man. The post-Christian man of our day differs from him as much as a divorcee differs from a virgin” ([God in the Dock](#)).

Further complicating things, today, Christians find themselves tarred by the ways that the Church misused its past power, privilege, and cultural dominance in ways deemed harmful to minorities all the while turning a blind eye to its own hypocritical abuses (see John Dickson, [Bullies and Saints: An Honest Look at the Good and Evil of Christian History](#)). This explains why in a multicultural democratic society it seems that everyone is entitled to a voice and every viewpoint is to be welcomed, unless it is a Christian one!

However, there is no need to despair. As G.K. Chesterton remarked a century ago: “On five occasions in history the Church has gone to the dogs, but on each occasion, it was the dogs that died” ([The Everlasting Man](#)). Although we are living through the sixth such declension; we can be confident that the Lord Jesus has risen, never to die again, and will succeed in building His church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Nevertheless, in the meantime, that still leaves open Francis Schaeffer’s famous question: “[How NOW shall we live?](#)” How should Christians go about engaging with the post-Christian world around us? It doesn’t take long to see that there are a variety of different Christian public engagement temperaments on display in the world today. Arguably, to some degree, the [splintering of evangelical unity](#) (embodied in the gospel-centred movement of the 2000s) reflects these differing temperaments.

The thing about temperaments is that none has exclusive or exhaustive access to the truth. However, the temptation with a temperament is to trust in ourselves and how we see things, rather than examine ourselves and be open to the corrective perspectives of others. As the proverb goes: the temptation for a person with only a hammer is to see and treat everything like a nail. Maybe that same temptation explains the deepening divisions among evangelical tribes today. Instead, what we need is the humility to learn from the other temperaments, which may see things that we cannot see from our own perspective.

Perhaps the best place to find wisdom for living in this post-Christendom era is to learn from the church in the pre-Christendom era (something that Niebuhr, operating with a Christendom mindset, engages with only sparingly). Already a number of Christian writers have begun to look in that direction. It’s why Os Guinness is fond of saying that we must “go backwards to go forwards” ([Renaissance: The Power of the Gospel However Dark The Times](#)). The same approach underlies Michael Frost’s survey [Mission is the Shape of Water: Learning from the Past to Inform Our Role in The World Today](#), as well as Alan Kreider’s work [The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The](#)

[*Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*](#) and David Reitveld's recent study, [*Being Christian After Christendom*](#).

However, few have looked in detail at Jesus' engagement with culture in the light of his 1st century Jewish context. Jesus lived and ministered during a time when God's people were a minority – a believing remnant – in the midst of a majority unbelieving world. The early church grew out of that faithful remnant and charted a unique course in contrast to the other major Jewish groups of the day.

So let us look at each of these four Jewish groups (aided by George Athas [*Bridging the Testaments: The History and Theology of God's People in the Second Temple Period*](#)) and the cultural engagement temperament they represent. Then we will be better informed to consider how we go forward to engage with our culture as a Christian minority, dispossessed of the cultural power and influence we once enjoyed.

The Zealots: The Culture Warrior Temperament

The first group, known as 'The Zealots,' were one of the Jewish nationalist groups in 1st century AD. They violently opposed Roman occupation, Herodian collaboration, and pagan ideological contagion. These revolutionaries took inspiration from the guerilla warfare tactics of the 2nd century BC Maccabean revolutionaries, who successfully liberated Israel from its captivity to the Hellenizing influence of the Seleucids (one of the four divisions of the Grecian Empire). In essence, the Zealots sought to make Israel great again. To that end they fought to take back control of the nation from their Gentile oppressors and establish the kingdom of God in the land. However, in a bitter irony, it was the actions of the Zealots that provoked the Roman backlash that resulted in the destruction of the Temple and desolation of Jerusalem in 70AD.

In the time of Jesus, these Jewish nationalists were active. In fact, in the lists of Jesus' core of twelve disciples, there is listed "Simon the Zealot" (Mark 3:18) – we can only imagine how he felt rubbing shoulders with Matthew the tax collector, who would have been reckoned a traitor and target for reprisals by the Zealots. Also, the name "Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed Jesus)" (Mark 3:19) may connect him with another revolutionary group called the Sicarii – perhaps his disillusionment with Jesus stemmed from realising that Jesus had no intention of being the Messianic culture warrior that the Zealots had set their hopes on.

The Zealots did not see the clash between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world as being a spiritual battle for peoples' hearts, minds, and souls. Instead, they saw it as a battle against flesh and blood, against human powers and imperial principalities in the earthly realm. They were not waiting for an end time apocalyptic event, when God would intervene from heaven to rescue His people and destroy the wicked. Instead, they acted as if it was their responsibility to bring the kingdom now through their revolutionary activism.

If there are any contemporary heirs of the temperament of the Zealots, then perhaps they can be found in the rising phenomenon of Christian Nationalism, represented by Stephen Wolfe ([*The Case For Christian Nationalism*](#)). This temperament is a particular temptation for this author, having been raised in Northern Ireland at the latter end of The Troubles, within a segment of the Unionist community steeped in Christian Nationalism and energised by the rallying cry: "For God and Ulster". It may also capture those who subscribe to some form of Theonomy, Christian Reconstruction, Liberation theology or Dominion theology.

Witnessing the changing demographics in the western world, the declining numbers and influence of Christians, the takeover of key cultural institutions (like education, media, government) to promote illiberal intolerant post-Christian ideologies and policies – it's no wonder that some Christians wish to fight back, both to defend their freedoms and to take back control. They may find comfort and co-belligerents among unbelievers with traditional values and conservative political principles. For example the so called 'Christian Atheists' – like secular historian Tom Holland (*Dominion*), psychologist Jordan Peterson (*Twelve Rules For Life*), sociologist Rodney Stark (*The Triumph of Christianity*), and cultural commentator Douglas Murray (*The Strange Death of Europe* and *The Madness of the Crowds*) - all recognize the dangerous experiment underway as our society serves the best fruits and brightest flowers of Christian cultural values from the root of the Christian worldview.

However, the temptation for this temperament is to be sucked into a culture war – to expend time and energies fighting for a return to Christendom and Christian civilization. This loses sight of the Great Commission to go into all the world to make disciples of Jesus, recognising that this present world is fading away, and people are facing a lost eternity without Christ. Furthermore, if we attempt to fight every battle on social media or in the public square, then in the end we risk exhausting ourselves, our resources and inflaming the existing suspicions of Christians as historic privileged oppressors who are only out for themselves.

Instead, the urgent need in this post-Christian era is the re-evangelisation of the nation and the revival of the church. We are engaged in a spiritual war, not a culture war. We must not get distracted by fighting for Christian cultural values, because Christian values abstracted from the Christian story mutate into monsters. As Glen Scrivener points out:

“The Western experiment has been an attempt to secularise Christianity. In order to pursue the kingdom without the King, we have had to dethrone the person of Christ and install abstract values instead. The problem should be obvious: persons can forgive you; values cannot. Values can only judge you. Such values were never ultimate in Christianity. Christian morals have always been the morals to a story. In the West today we have ditched the story, anonymised the Hero and kept the morals—and now we wonder why our culture splinters under a million angry accusations. The kingdom without the King is not a place of liberation so much as a place of judgment. We desperately need a person above and beyond the values—a person who does not simply expect our best but who forgives our worst” (*The Air We Breathe*)

It is only as more Christians are converted and commissioned to take Christ with them into their [culture making vocations](#) that the gradual transformation of society will result again.

The Essenes: The Culture Withdrawal Temperament

The second group, known as the Essenes, are conspicuous by their absence from the Gospel accounts. But absence was the Essenes' signature! Following the eclipse of the Davidic dynasty and Levitical priesthood by the Hasmonean Dynasty (established after the successful Maccabean revolution), the Essenes had withdrawn from what they considered the corrupt swamp of Jerusalem and the Temple. They settled in like-minded communities around the Dead Sea, most famously Qumran. In these prototypical monastic communities, they raised their families, preserved their beliefs (most notably in the Dead Sea Scrolls), and awaited the apocalyptic vindication of God.

The Essenes' 'Qumran Option' has parallels with a contemporary strategy advocated by Rod Dreher (*The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*). It is important to not miss the nuance in Dreher's proposal for a strategic cultural withdrawal:

“Many of The Benedict Option’s critics accuse me of urging Christians to head for the hills. It’s not true. While I do call for a strategic withdrawal – a limited kind of culture-war Dunkirk operation to gain the church militant a space in which to regroup, retrain and re-engage in the long struggle – the Benedict Option is not a call to escapism and inaction. Rather, it’s a call to deeper attention to spiritual discipline and building resilient Christian community, both for our own sake and for the life of the world Christ calls us to serve”.

Dreher argues that at this time Christians cannot win the culture war and so the Church needs to become an Ark to outlast the present difficulties. He suggests:

“Could it be that the best way to fight the flood is to... stop fighting the flood? That is, to quit piling up sandbags and to build an ark in which to shelter until the water recedes and we can put our feet on dry land again? Rather than wasting energy and resources fighting unwinnable political battles, we should instead work on building communities, institutions and networks of resistance that can outwit, outlast, and eventually overcome the occupation”.

To that end Dreher draws inspiration from the Benedictine monastic communities which preserved Christian civilization during the so called ‘Dark Ages’, following the fall of the Christianized western Roman Empire.

There are many helpful proposals contained in The Benedict Option, like the importance of personal spiritual formation, Christian education according to the biblical worldview, the church as a thick spiritual family, discernment about the use of technology, to name a few. The church does need to be an alternative, counter-cultural community committed to out-think, out-live, out-love, out-pray, and out-last the secular world.

However, this leaves out of the picture another important part of the story of Christian history – what the Irish might call ‘The Patrick Option’ or the Scottish might call ‘The Columba Option’. For during those same centuries, bands of Christian missionaries were sent out from their remote monastic communities to re-evangelise pagan western Europe.

Likewise, in this new post-Christian era of history, we need both a Benedict and Columba strategy. We cannot under-estimate the importance of what James Davidson Hunter terms Christian “faithful presence within” social institutions and engagement in public life ([*To Change The World*](#)). After all, Jesus described the church as both “a city on the hill” (Benedict’s ecclesiological withdrawal) as well as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Columba’s missional engagement) (Matthew 5:16-17). For as long as there are open doors and opportunities, Christians should make the most of them for the glory of God and commendation of the gospel. Just as Daniel and his friends in exile discovered, God still reigns and has plans for His people in the midst of our cultural exile.

The Sadducees: The Culture Accommodation Temperament

The third group, known as the Sadducees, were the religious elites who controlled the Temple at the heart of the Jewish faith and society. They derived their authority, not from the Torah (with its stipulations for a Levitical priesthood), but from the political powers of the day – initially the Hasmoneans and later the Romans/Herodians. They enjoyed status and privileges above most common people. Also, they were highly educated and as a result became influenced by Greek language, culture, and philosophy.

Unfortunately, the Sadducees fell into compromise in the pursuit of maintaining their power and privileges. They forgot they were in exile and instead wanted to be comfortable. Additionally, they were taken captive by unbiblical philosophies. This is why in the Gospels we are told that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the body (Matthew 22:23) and in Acts we are told they did not believe in supernatural beings like angels (Acts 23:8). They became so theologically and culturally accommodated to the wider Greco-Roman culture that they no longer felt at home in their own Jewish Scriptures. Indeed, the warning in the old proverb ‘whoever is wed to the spirit of this age will be a widower for all the ages to come,’ proved true in the case of the Sadducees, who ceased to exist after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

This same broad road of theological and compromise cultural accommodation was well travelled by Liberal Protestantism in the 19th and 20th centuries and now by many Christian Progressives in the 21st century. However, there is a clear and present danger with this strategy. The proof is in the pudding: there is [no section of the church in greater decline](#). Although the strategy of accommodating, affirming, and aligning with the prevailing culture may seem to win acceptance and applause for a time; eventually, the wider society realises that the church offers nothing that can be found elsewhere, without the religious dressing.

Instead, in this post-Christian era, the church needs to remember that from the earliest times it has been a marginalized minority of “elect exiles” (1 Peter 1:1). Christendom was the abnormality; this is a return to normal service. The radical countercultural difference of Christianity is not something that the church should be afraid or embarrassed about; rather that is what continues to give Christianity a missional edge. We should not be surprised that if an all-knowing and all-wise God has truly spoken in the Bible that He is not going to agree with everything we believe today. If we read the Bible and don’t allow God to disagree with us and challenge us, then it’s not God we believe in but in ourselves. Therefore, we must faithfully hold and contend for the unchanging truth of the Bible in our ever-changing contemporary world.

The Pharisees: The Culture Separatist Temperament

The fourth group were the Pharisees. If the Sadducees were the cultural elites, then the Pharisees were the populists. Whereas the Sadducees embraced and were compromised by the prevailing Greco-Roman culture; the Pharisees (the separate ones) practised strict separation, having grown out of an earlier movement called the Hassidim (the pious ones) which opposed the Hellenizing multicultural influence of the Seleucids. The Pharisees took seriously Israel’s divine calling to be a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:6) - believing that holiness was not just required of the priests in the Temple but included the ordinary person in the street. To that end they established local schools and synagogues to educate people in the Scriptures.

Also, taking seriously obedience to God’s written law, they developed an extensive oral law applied into the everyday details of life. These traditions of men fenced the commands of God, helping the devout Jew to live a holy life before God. Despite these positive motivations, the Pharisees are infamous for their self-righteousness and judgementalism against those they considered to be unholy – tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners (Mark 2:13-17).

In fact, the Pharisees are remembered more for what they were against than what they were for. For example, they were known for being against sabbath breaking, but not for human flourishing – the very reason that God gave humans the sabbath in creation and gifted it to the Israelite slaves liberated in the exodus (Mark 2:23-3:6).

It is easy to be harsh towards the Pharisees, but they bear more than a passing resemblance with some forms of conservative evangelical Christianity. Conservative evangelicals (like this author) place a great deal of emphasis on the Bible (both in personal devotional reading and public expositional preaching) and on personal holiness. However, Michael Reeves ([Evangelical Pharisees](#)) highlights the ways that these strengths can also become problems, if not controlled by a deep appreciation for the grace and love of God for all sinners.

In this post-Christian era, when the church feels under attack, society becomes [more polarized](#) and public [discourse lacks civility](#), it is all the more important that Christians embody a commitment to both God's truth and grace. We must not look down on other people who sin in ways different to the way we sin. We must subvert the world's suspicions and assumptions that Christians are judgmental and hypocrites, by holding out to them the same divine love and grace that we depend on for ourselves. It is essential that we are committed to not just preaching God's word but reflecting God's heart.

Similarly, in this post-Christian era the church needs to be known for more than what it is against, but what it is for. In all the culture war controversies over race, gender, sexuality, the church must stand firm and faithful on God's unchanging Word – while simultaneously being known for what we're for and why the gospel is good news, and not just what we're against. A model of this type of cultural engagement is Rebecca McLaughlin:

“We believe that Black lives matter because they matter to Jesus. We don't believe that love is love but that God is love, and that he gives us glimpses of his love through different kinds of relationship. We believe women's rights are human rights, because God made us — male and female — in his image; and for that same reason we believe that babies in the womb have rights as well. We believe God has a special concern for single mothers, orphans and immigrants, because Scripture tells us so again and again. And we believe that diversity does indeed make us stronger, because Jesus calls people from every tribe and tongue and nation to worship him as one body together” ([The Secular Creed](#)).

Neither as a minority community can we afford to be dividing and separating amongst ourselves on matters of indifference or conscience, seeking extra-biblical degrees of purity – instead in Gavin Ortlund's words we must “[Find The Right Hills To Die On](#)”.

The Early Christians: The ‘Christ and Culture’ Alternative

At last we come to the example of Jesus and the first Christians. It is not uncommon to hear the objection that Jesus was not a political figure, rather He was a spiritual saviour. However, that overlooks the fact that the ancient world knew of no hermetic separation between the two. Instead, the concept of a separation between the secular and the sacred realms owes more to later church and state relations in the Christendom era.

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah – the fulfillment of Israel's hopes of a divine king whose kingdom would bring justice and peace to the earth. Although Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not “of this world” (John 18:36), He was speaking of the manner of its coming, rather than denying that it would bring about a revolution in this world: morally, socially, economically, politically and spiritually. Since today we live between the eschatological ‘now’ and the ‘not yet’ of God's inaugurated kingdom, following Christ necessarily has implications for our political and public lives as dual citizens of both this present age and the age to come. We do not just live under the reign of Christ in the church; we should seek to live for the reign of Christ out in the world.

Nevertheless, Jesus' engagement with the state is notoriously complex and defying simple categorization. For example, in his dealings with King Herod, at one time Jesus speaks truth to power (Luke 13:31-35), and on another occasion Jesus remains silent (Luke 23:6-12). On some occasions Jesus challenges those in authority (for example overturning the economic system in the Temple and excoriating the religious elites for their exploitation of the poor and disregard for the Gentiles). On other occasions, Jesus tolerates those in authority (for example when He consents to paying taxes to godless Caesar).

Also, there are many issues that Jesus chose to remain silent about (for example, the institution of slavery or sexual discrimination against women). However, Jesus' silence does not mean that these were not issues that mattered to God. Instead, they suggest that Jesus was playing a longer game. Rather than launching a direct frontal assault on Roman authority, He undermined the foundations on which these injustices were built, and created the church which embodied a different way of life animated by [God's better story](#) for human flourishing. That's why in the church women were valued and honoured, as well as why slaves were dignified and treated as equals. In time the world's attitudes on these issues would be changed because of Jesus' patient example and teaching being multiplied through the church.

When Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God in parables, sometimes He pictures it as leaven (Matthew 13:33)– which works quietly but powerfully to transform the world – or as a mustard seed (Mark 3:31-32) – which starts off small but grows to fill the earth. However, at other times, Jesus teaches that in this present age the kingdom of God will grow like wheat alongside the tares, as the vindication of God's people awaits the final day of judgement (Matthew 13:24-30).

All this demonstrates that Jesus was not a Zealot, an Essene, a Sadducee or a Pharisee – in fact three of these four groups conspired together to have Jesus put to death! Instead, Jesus charted His own distinct course of engagement with the public square. Unlike the Zealots - Jesus eschewed fighting to bring the kingdom through violence. Unlike the Essenes - Jesus didn't withdraw with His disciples into holy huddle but sent them out to preach and demonstrate the power of the gospel. Unlike the Sadducees - Jesus overturned the tables in the temple and pronounced judgement on the corrupt institution that robbed widows. Unlike the Pharisees - Jesus befriended and loved sinners into the kingdom.

Taking this evidence all together, David Reitveld summarises Jesus' alternative model for cultural engagement:

“Both Jesus and his disciples, then later the apostles and the early church, lived under totalitarian regimes. They did not have democratic rights. Their capacity to influence the socio-political injustices of their day by direct confrontation was zero. Speaking truth to power was a death wish. Instead, a different approach was adopted, a more subversive one. If a lack of power and influence means confrontation was likely to be counter-productive, as an alternative the twelve and the early church chose to live by a different code. They were neither zealots wishing for a political and military revolt, nor Essenes who withdrew. Rather, they chose to be in, but not of the world. And it worked. In time the entire empire changed for the better” ([Being Christian After Christendom](#))

Conclusion

Having surveyed the different cultural engagement temperaments in Jesus' day, in closing, here are some summary reflections from the past to inform our ministry in present day Scotland.

We can learn from the *Zealots* to remember that we are not just in a cultural war. We are engaged in a spiritual war that cannot be won by human strategies or policies alone. We cannot fight every battle or respond in outrage to every headline as our society drifts further away from the Christian worldview. Instead, we must recommit ourselves to praying for revival and the re-evangelisation of Scotland with the gospel.

We can learn from the *Essenes* of the importance for a minority of developing a thick, counter-cultural Christian community in local churches to preserve and pass on the faith as the surrounding culture becomes increasingly intolerant. However, balancing this, we need to remain faithfully present and engaged in the public square and cultural institutions. While things are hard, we must not give up and walk away. There are still open doors for the gospel and the kingdom, and we should make the most of them for as long as they remain open.

We can learn from the *Sadducees* about the dangers of cultural accommodation and theological compromise. If we turn our back on counter-cultural Christian truth, in pursuit of cultural acceptance, then we will have nothing of value left to offer to the world.

We can learn from the *Pharisees* not to be quick to judge people for sinning differently to the way we sin. The church needs to be a safe place for the refugees and survivors of the sexual revolution to find hope and healing in Jesus. Neither as a minority can we afford the luxury of dividing into ever smaller tribes, weakening our essential unity around the authority of God's Word and the centrality of the Gospel.

We are *Christians* – we are to follow Christ, not our temperaments – as we strive to live in this post-Christian world, while remaining distinct from it. Without a doubt this is a challenge, but it is the one that God has entrusted to this generation, and we would do well to learn from those who have walked a similar road in pre-Christendom days. May God help us and keep us faithful!

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