

Ethics and the Christian

Popular Culture and the
Church

Christians Face 2 Cultural dilemmas

1. How do we live out Kingdom values in a popular culture?
2. To what extent is popular culture welcome within the Church?
3. C.S. Lewis pointed out that “culture” is inescapable. For instance, we don’t read good books, we’ll read bad ones, if we don’t listen to good music, we’ll listen to bad music

It is God's will that Churches exist trans-culturally

1. Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;
2. All Churches have the same basic function: prayer, fellowship, ministry of the Word
3. All Churches honor the Lord's day
4. All Churches look to the Bible for instruction

Churches then, operate with some contact and interaction of their local culture

1. So we can use electricity
2. And—while our clothing must be appropriate—it need not be robes and sandals
3. And we can take advantage of modern technology—so we can use hymnals

But we cannot import the moral elements of popular culture

1. We can't celebrate sin
2. Paul condemned the Corinthians for doing just that.
1Cor 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 5:2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.
3. Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

To what extent can we bring into the Church, those elements of popular culture that influence the morality of a culture?

1. In other words, some people argue that popular culture itself is neutral
2. And that as long as the content is ok, the vehicle for the content is ok

Can the “form” of the message cancel or contradict the content of the message?

1. For instance, what happens if I speak the truth—in hate?
2. Is watching a movie the same experience as reading the book?
3. Is listening to a Gospel song with a hard, driving beat, really the same as listening to one with a more moderate tempo?