



Culture War An Expanded Christian View

The Challenge of Culture Wars

Homosexuality is one of the most divisive moral issues in our society today. The rhetoric by leaders on both sides of this "Culture War" issue can be quite inflammatory which does not produce very good soil for sowing the seeds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are a number of challenges that evangelical Christianity faces in its' effort to protect the moral fabric of our nation:

FIRST, there is the challenge of ensuring that the Gospel can be effectively shared with those outside our churches. Jesus often went to people to dine with them in peace and listen to their concerns and then share a story that revealed the truth about who He is - a Savior for sinners, a Physician for the sick. We are called by Christ to likewise go to people outside His Kingdom in His footsteps. Yet the message going out beyond the shores of evangelical Christianity - through the media in particular - is not the Gospel but a moral mandate connected to a political platform. The voice of God is often a "still, small" voice yet the "Culture War" inherently requires a very loud voice. Thus, the first challenge we face is to recapture an authentic voice of the Gospel to reach out to our world in accordance with the Great Commission.

SECOND, there is the challenge of ensuring that we evangelicals don't play the role of Pharisee by prioritizing various sins and making value-based judgments - even salvation judgments - based upon people's behaviors. Jesus encountered the "ultimate" sinners of His day with extreme love, compassion and grace even as He also called them to repentance. His invitation was inclusive and His command to repent was likewise inclusive. Yet often those outside our churches feel they are the target of evangelical Christian attempts to rank the homosexual sin as egregiously evil while men struggling inside the church with internet pornography simply have a "problem" or struggle with "personal brokenness". Not to mention our rate of divorce, our love of money, our addiction to material comforts and many other sins within evangelical Christianity. Romans 1 does a great job of describing ALL of us - regardless of our political, religious or sexual identities! And Romans 2 really calls us away from playing the role of the Pharisee when Paul says, "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the SAME things." His point can be applied to an evangelical view of those who live in gay relationships - they have a homosexual sexual sin problem...and we have a heterosexual sexual sin problem. We do the SAME things. If we who have Christ still yet sin in our frailties and brokenness, we should certainly expect that those around us will do the SAME thing.

THIRD, there is the challenge of ensuring that we evangelicals don't blame homosexuals for the decline of morality in our society. In Romans 1, Paul lays out a progressive decline in human morality and it is quite striking that homosexuality does not commence moral decline - according to Paul, homosexuality emerges in cultures long after such cultures have already commenced worshipping created things (money, materialism, power) over our Creator. And thus,

homosexuals are not to blame for our society's moral decline - all sinners who serve two masters are complicit and I am afraid that includes you and I. What if the real "Culture War" is not - first - about winning the heart and soul of America through a series of political and legal victories? What if the real "Culture War" is first and foremost about winning the heart and soul of God's people in western evangelical Christianity to return to our first love, Jesus Christ? Put another way, what if homosexuals are not the greatest obstacle to Biblical values and a Christian worldview in our society? What if...what if we as God's people are? It is an un-arguable fact that we are complicit in the moral decline of our society.

FOURTH, there is the challenge of remembering the road to repentance. The concept of repentance is God's invention and since ancient days He has used this as an invitation to call His people back to Himself. It is out of His patience and kindness that we find a God who invites His followers to come back to Himself over and over again. And I believe He is calling us - evangelical Christians - back to Him today. In Romans 2, Paul says it this way, "When you, a mere man, pass judgment on others and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you (all of us) toward repentance?" Jesus simply said, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Fellow evangelical brothers and sisters, we have many of our own "planks" that need to first be removed from our own eyes. Possibly this is related to why Jesus cautioned, "The first will be last, and the last will be first."

The Cure for Culture Wars

The cure for the "Culture War" may not be a legal or political "cleaning up" of America where the continuance of such improved state is dependent upon the sustainability of changeable laws and regulations and the continuous winning of one political party over another. The fact is - laws and regulations won't transform human hearts anyway. There is NO law or regulation that would have ever led me to surrender my homosexual identity and gay lover to Jesus Christ. Only God's patience, tolerance and kindness - the wind of His Spirit, the power of His Word and the person of His Son - can do that.

Rather, the cure for the Culture War can be found in the same ancient invitation that God gave to His people time and time again throughout all of history - the cure is for we Christians who call ourselves by His name to:

Humble ourselves before our God and our world.
Repent of our sins and the idols that master us.
Pray for God's divine help for us and our world.
Trust that only God can heal us and our world.
Love our enemies as much as we love our neighbors.
Obey Christ in His call to "go" beyond our church walls with His Gospel.

The ancient invitation is this: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and (I) will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

FOTOS Ministries, Inc.
<http://fishontheotherside.org>
bjhenson@gmail.com
(877) 683-6867

Lead Them Home
<http://fotos.podbean.com>
<http://billhenson.blogspot.com>
(508) 971-7585

A New Day

Let the "cure" begin with us returning to our First Love and then extending Christ's love to others following in His footsteps. He will enable others to come to Him by His kindness, tolerance and patience. His will is that none should perish but that all might receive His offer of Eternal Life. He will not lose ANY who have been given to Him by the Father.

Our God is outside time and space....what will become true one day is as TRUE today as it will be in that day! So if it is revival and a cure for the Culture War that we are hungry for, let us in faith get about the work of the King of Kings and share the love of Jesus Christ beyond the walls of our churches believing that it is the "seed" of the Gospel scattered throughout our world that is the real cure for the Culture War...

Special Note: If you are interested in reading more about God's love for you and His purposes for your life, see The Gospel.

Bill Henson is available to speak at your church, university, seminary, family ministry or student group across all denominations. Check out What We Offer and then we invite you to Contact Us for more information.

Special Note: This paper is not intended as an attack upon Christians working to protect our culture from un-Biblical influence. It is solely intended to elevate the value of first-person repentance and other-centered evangelism as a lasting cure for Culture Wars. Political movements will swing to the left and to the right over time. Jesus is a permanent solution to the Culture War and people need to see "who" Jesus is...in us.