Lies our Culture tells Us

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# **Colossians 2:6-10 New American Standard Bible (NASB)**

**6** Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him,**7** having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.

**8** See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. **9** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, **10** and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

**What is Culture?**

The English word culture comes from the Latin word *Cultura* which means “not to leave nature as it was but to make something of it”. To take something raw or from nature and make something out of it. That is where the word cultivate comes from. Much like “a cultivating, like agriculture” or “to tend, guard, cultivate, or till”

A **culture** is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, **beliefs, values**, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Andrew Delbanco author of *The Real American Dream,* Harvard graduate, and distinguished professor of Humanities at Columbia University argues that our culture has developed around three concepts or forces in which Americans have found hope: before the 1800’s it was God, during the 1800’s it was Nation and after the 1800’s it was Self.

"The old story that religion told was no longer credible to many people," Delbanco said. "We should never underestimate the number of people who still believe in some version of it, but no one would argue that it holds the same place it did 300 years ago."

The culture expects you to be your own hope, yet how can you be especially with death in mind? Who but God has the power of resurrection or the power to defeat death?

**Cultural Engagement:**

As members of the church we are to prepare and equip each other to do good works. I hope to prepare and equip you to more readily and confidently engage the culture.

**Cornerstone’s 2 year recap**

1. First we spent 2 years of deep teaching of what we believe and why
2. Now we are learning what everyone else believes
3. **The reason: so we can engage them and win people over to Christ**

**Why engage the culture?**

“If disciples are not getting made, if converts are not being won, if churches are not being planted then all of the information is impotent because it is ultimately to lead to transformation” - Mark Driscoll

Jesus basic aim was to do the Father’ will. As followers of Christ we have the same objective; Preach the gospel, win the lost, and call all to repent (literally means: to return, to change, or to reconsider. To be re-united with God)

Luke 4:43 But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Like 15:7 “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

**Why did Paul Write Colossians?**

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, around 62 AD, from prison with the explicit goal of correcting the heresies in Colossae and Laodicea so that they will not be deceived and fall prey to false gospels and teaching (Colossians 2:1-4)

**“Engaging people sounds offensive”**

Yes the gospel is offensive, but a sinful life is also offensive. So we must learn to engage the culture without an offensive character, because the gospel in itself will offend people who live an offensive life.

“I really can't consider a Christian a good, moral person if he isn't trying to convert me.” - Michael, Political Science student from Dartmouth University

Penn Jillette, the atheist illusionist and comedian: “I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward. . . . How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

“You may think that you are in a tough spot for sharing your faith at work. If that is your main excuse for not sharing your faith in your workplace, you are going to have some interesting explaining to do with some people when you get to heaven who lost their lives because they opened their mouth in their workplace. And that is happening to this very day” - Michael Ramsden

**What are the lies culture tells us?**

**Individuality and autonomy is the greatest virtue/ultimate human good**.

3 points of authority. Me/Us/Him.

* I am my highest authority
  + Gen 3:5 - "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
  + obedience vs. tolerance as highest good
* The government, the people as a collective, or some group is the highest authority
  + Daniel 3 - Shadrach Meshach and Abednego
  + Daniel 6 - Daniel and the Lion’s den
    - God can deliver us (important point)
    - We must follow God even when other groups or authorities tell us not to (important point for you right now)
* God is the highest authority

From making ourselves our highest authority autonomous from God, other lies are given birth

* You have to be true to yourself
  + No. You have to be true to God
* What what someone does in private is okay because it doesn't hurt anybody.
  + “What I do on my time, in my privacy is my business and nobody can tell me what to do”
    - It is still sin, it still offends God, and there is still a consequence, not only for the sin but for living apart from God, as your own God.
* If I don't hurt anyone it's okay.
  + Your thoughts, actions, and patterns still hurt others. They breed behaviors (selfishness/no accountability), false expectations (pornography), they create habits that are carried out in public, and it still hurts God. And by hurt I mean offends.
* Who are you to say…
  + I am an ambassador - 1 Corinthians 5:20-21 “**20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21** He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
    - I am not telling you what to do, I am begging you on behalf of Christ. He is trying to save you because he loves you, simply accept his pardon and his love, know him, and you will get all the goodness that comes with it. This is heaven.
* Me-Centered Christianity
  + I am not the center of my faith, Christ is
  + Consumer Christian
    - Built up to do good works, not built up to receive
    - Seeking an experience or seeking God
  + Church becomes a Heaven payment plan

**If you were born that way then it’s okay**

* Psalms 51:5 “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”
* Ephesians 2:3 “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath,even as the rest.”
* We were born sinful and as children of wrath, I don’t think that is where any of us want to be.
* “Children of wrath” context: wrath - violent passion, anger exhibited in punishment.
* Nature opposes this ideal - Remaining the way you were born means to never mature and remain Childish
* The culture itself actually opposes this ideal - This is why we have laws and rules
  + The premise commits suicide
  + You can speak of this ideal but you cannot actually live it out
* God opposes this ideal
  + 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 “When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. **12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. **13** But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.
  + This ideal is contradictory to love. Love by virtue grows and matures, remaining the way you were born means to be stagnant and childish.

**Separation of church and state**

* This phrase first came from Letter to the Dansbury Baptist association Jan. 1, 1802 by Thomas Jefferson
  + In light of accusations that Jefferson was an atheist.
  + The purpose was to assure them that the government would not hinder their faith.
  + the phrase was taken from “The Garden and the Wilderness”, rendered by Roger Williams, founder of the Rhode Island Plantation colony, and a Baptist. This was very familiar to the Baptists at the time.
  + He was not going to make government the head of the church as was the practice in England and the very reason America was formed.
* Joseph Story - U.S Supreme Court Justice (1811-1845)
  + Commentaries on the Constitution (1833)

§ 1868. Probably at the time of the adoption of the constitution, and of the amendment to it, now under consideration, the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America was, that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience, and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation.

§ 1870. But the duty of supporting religion, and especially the Christian religion, is very different from the right to force the consciences of other men, or to punish them for worshipping God in the manner, which, they believe, their accountability to him requires...The rights of conscience are, indeed, beyond the just reach of any human power. They are given by God, and cannot be encroached upon by human authority, without a criminal disobedience of the precepts of natural, as well as of revealed religion.

§ 1871. The real object of the amendment was, not to countenance, much less to advance Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment, which should give to an hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.

* Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and South Carolina not only had state-supported churches, but refused to ratify the constitution unless the Constitution included the prohibition of the federal government interfering with their already established state religions.
* some states at the time **required** those seeking election to be Christians

**Your personal faith should be private**

Psalms 105:1 “Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name;

Make known His deeds among the peoples.”

Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** [[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-24215e)]Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you [[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-24216f)]always, even to the end of the age.”

Jude 3 “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.”

**Faith should not be in schools/Science and Faith are enemies**

The Christian faith in the Western world gave rise to modern science, where theology was the most important of all the sciences; the study of God. And without which modern science would never have been possible.

* Gregor Johann Mendel was a German-speaking Moravian scientist and Augustinian friar who gained posthumous fame as the founder of the modern science of genetics - he has the answers to all of Darwin’s questions.
* Reasons.org - Astronomer Hugh Ross, Biochemist Fazale Rana, Philosopher Kenneth R. Samples, and Astrophysicist Jeff Zweerink show how science supports and affirm the Christian faith.