

The Hospitality of Christ for a Secular Age

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JK's notes:

1. The act of Creation is an act of hospitality. All of creation is a guest of God
2. We are his most dearly invited guests. He feeds us with his own bounty
3. Though we were exiled to another table, his desire never abates. He will return us to his table.
4. The Bible is the story of this compulsion.
5. Jesus is of course the greatest representative of God's hospitality
6. "Come to me" "Take, eat, drink, this is my body, this is my blood."
7. Jesus portrays God as almost panicked that he will not have enough people in his house to share his bounty
8. There is an absence of this conviction in the western church
9. this conviction is eclipsed by two other visions: God as judge, God is a healer.
10. God is a divider or God is first a healer or giver of personal transformation
11. But God's judgment is against inhospitable living and his healing is for the nations
12. The Scriptures, beginning to end, tell the story of the world as treasured guest
13. Viewing the world through the lens of invitation rather than enmity or identity: desired, not hated, guests.
14. Recovering:
 1. **God is the eager host**
 2. **The world is best understood as desired guests**
 3. **The church is a gathering servant**
15. The church's vocation is inviting the world into union with God:
 1. Noah: bear the world back into the joys of God
 2. Moses: Gather scattered slaves again into the land of promise
 3. Israel: Gather the nations again to the mountain of God, to the house of the Lord, to the chambers of life
16. Jesus came as host, guest, and gathering servant. And so are his people.
17. Pentecost sends us out as gathering servants seeking desired guests into the banquet of Triune Joy.
18. Mission work is an expression of our constitution. This is just what we do.
19. Absence of conviction about our fundamental vocation leads to other works
 1. **fortification** - to remain untainted (hides from neighbors)
 2. **accommodation** - just hang out in the world (accommodates their neighbors)
 3. **domination** - go and win in the world (conquers their neighbors)
 4. None of these *gather their neighbors*
20. There are ways that we might "render ingredients" into a feast for the world. We have to retrieve the glory of our faith, "we are all laboring under the strain and diminishment of the beauty of what we profess." Modern evangelicalism: framework of law, extracted from the framework of union, joined to the framework of individualism, baptized as the Gospel. This is the product of deeply impoverished theological imagination that needs to be renewed. Until the theologians lead this effort we cannot recover a theology of hospitality.
 1. **remember the plight of our neighbors.** Western Xianity is plagued by anxiety of a secular takeover led by a cabal of self-assured secularists whose chief goal is to displace Christians and take over the home that once was ours, and many of our

people are fearful of this. So neighbors are threats, not invited guests. It cannot understand what our neighbors are experiencing. Secularism doesn't create coherence, but homelessness. Disintegration/estrangement. They don't even know what gender they are. There is a deep, structural homelessness in the modern age. As a result they are laying about in all the most destructive places.

2. **restructure the shape of our liturgies.** We have to teach via liturgy, ending at the Table, sending them out into the world to be gatherers. It has to be liturgically enacted. This movement is going to heal us.
 3. **reinstitute structures of formation.** It's all about worldview and timelines; we haven't taught our people the structures of virtue of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. They need to experience confession and absolution from another human being.
 4. **recreate institutions of grace.** Institutions win. Why not create a new missionary order or a new institution of prayer? Common housing, common life, etc.
21. A vision we could borrow from the Black church, a body that has lived as faithful Christians but in exile has maintained structures of hospitality. The black church is the heir of the medieval monastic vision.

Questions I have:

1. Does this vision only work for center-city luddites or curious academic enclaves? Suburbanites live in the belief that hospitality is when you have people into your house.
2. In what way does our liturgy shape a culture of hospitality for Christians plunged in a secular culture of homelessness?
3. Is "fencing the table" verbally in the worship service a biblical practice? Jesus eats with his betrayer. How do we fence the table without contorting a theology of hospitality?
4. How does the Sunday service as Temple Worship more effectively communicate the welcome of Jesus in secular communities? What are those communication pieces?