

We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



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# Evangelism in a Skeptical World

Week 8



# Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- ~~Week 7 Ch5 Contextualization for Evangelism~~
  - ~~How to Interpret Culture, Thoughts, Themes, Story~~
- **Week 8 Ch6 Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics**
  - Enter, Challenge, Fulfill
- **Week 9 Ch7 Storytelling the Gospel**
  - Styles of Learning, Story-telling

# Course Outline (12 Weeks)

- **Week 10** Ch8 How to Give Evangelistic Topical Talks
  - What is a Topical Talk and how to give one
- **Week 11** Ch9 How to Give Evangelistic Expository Talks
  - What is an Expository Talks and how to give one
- **Week 12** Ch10 Religious Epistemology, Apologetics
  - Moving People from Hostile to Loyal



# ***Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics***

## ***Enter, Challenge, Fulfill***

Chapter 6



# Recap

- How can we connect the gospel with a culture?  
(Contextualize)
  - Use the tool of gospel-cultural hermeneutics:
    1. Find a cultural text and interpret it with the lenses of the gospel
    2. Speak to the audience in their culture
      - Use the language, idioms, and metaphors of their cultural
    3. Show them how Jesus fulfills their cultural storyline



# Cultural Text

- What is a cultural text?
  - Works of meaning
    - Buildings: Churches, skyscrapers, museums
    - Music: Big band, country, opera, rock, rap
    - Movies/TV: The Simpsons, Die Hard, Better Off Dead
    - Groups: Soccer moms, Masons, Shooting Clubs
    - Art, books, etc...
- Each of these things communicates a meaning or value



# Biblical Example

- Acts 17:16-34



<sup>16</sup> While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed when he saw that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, as well as in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also debated with him. Some said, “What is this ignorant show-off trying to say?” Others replied, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities” — because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

Acts 17:16–18





<sup>19</sup> They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, and said, “May we learn about this new teaching you are presenting?” <sup>20</sup> Because what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these things mean.” <sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

<sup>22</sup> Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, “People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. <sup>23</sup> For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands.

Acts 17:19–24



<sup>25</sup> Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup> From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. <sup>27</sup> He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' <sup>29</sup> Since, then, we are God's offspring, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

Acts 17:25–29





<sup>30</sup> “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

<sup>32</sup> When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him, but others said, “We’d like to hear from you again about this.” <sup>33</sup> So Paul left their presence. <sup>34</sup> However, some people joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Acts 17:30–34



# Biblical Example

- Acts 17:16-34
- Paul visits Athens and interprets their culture
  - Paul sees all the idols
  - There need for something more then their mundane
  - The Athenians want to be sure they get all the blessings
    - From all the Gods
    - Even the ones they don't know





# Biblical Example

- Paul recognizes and empathies with their desires
  - “I see that you are extremely religious”
  - This is a good thing
    - Belief in a power greater than yourself
- Paul has entered their culture
  - He understands their desires and beliefs
- This is the first step, what is the next?



# Biblical Example

- Challenge the culture
  - “what you worship in ignorance”
  - Paul tells the Athenians their cultural story
    - They are seeking a god that will fulfill their desires
    - This god doesn't do it all, maybe this one, or this one
- You will never have a happy ending until you know who this unknown god is





# Biblical Example

- Paul fulfills their story line
  - “what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you”
  - The unknown god is now known
  - Jesus is the happy ending
- Paul then explains how to come to Christ
- Like Paul, we must find something significant from culture
  - Then enter, challenge, and fulfill



# ***Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics***

## **Enter the Storyline of the Culture**

Chapter 6





# Six Step Process

1. Read the “text” on its terms and describe it (**Enter**)
2. Understand it (**Enter**)
3. Empathize with it (**Enter**)
4. Deconstruct it (**Challenge**)
5. How does the gospel answer this existential cry and storyline? (**Fulfill**)
6. Speak the gospel (**Fulfill**)



# Read the “Text” #1

1. Read the “text” on its terms and describe it
  - Describe the facts of the text, what is the metaphor?
  - Paul found idols, the object of their worship
  - What about in our culture
    - Let’s look at and examine
      - *American Idol*, movie *The Duff*, the Mason Jar





# Read the “Text” #1

- *American Idol*
  - A singing contest, on forever, reaching over 30 million
  - Metaphor: Believe in yourself and chase your dreams



# Read the “Text” #1

- *The Duff*
  - A movie about a teenager who doesn't fit in
  - DUFF: Designated Ugly Fat Friend
  - Metaphor: A coming-of-age story set in high school





# Read the “Text” #1

- The Mason Jar
  - Was used for canning and preserving
  - Now it is used as drinkware in all fashionable places
  - Metaphor: Tradition



# Understand It #2

## 2. Understand it

- We must understand the text
  - What is its worldview?
  - What is its God given existential cry?
- Paul: The people wanted to connect with the spiritual realm





# Understand It #2

- *American Idol*
  - Anyone can become a superstar
  - Part of the Western individualistic nature
  - Existential cry:
    - Seeking recognition, respect, and success



# Understand It #2

- *The Duff*
  - Don't let others define you
  - You should define yourself
  - Part of the Western individualistic nature
  - Existential cry:
    - Seeking recognition, respect, and belonging



# Understand It #2

- The Mason Jar
  - We have traditions, stories, history
  - Existential cry:
    - Transcendence
    - A story greater than our own
    - Connectedness





# Empathize With It #3

## 3. Empathize with it

- Can we feel the emotions behind the cry
- Why is it an attractive storyline?
- Why would I want this message to be true or real?
- Paul: They worshiped all the gods and are so concerned
  - They make an idol for anyone they left out
  - That's some dedication



# Empathize With It #3

- *American Idol*
  - Millions watch it and are moved by it
  - The message speaks to us
    - No matter poor, rich, white, black
      - You have a chance for success
    - Just believe hard enough
    - You can overcome and make it!



# Empathize With It #3

- *The DUFF*
  - Even if people don't give us respect, we deserve it
  - As long as we have self respect that's all we need
  - This frees us from worrying about
    - How we look, what we wear
  - This story empowers us to be strong, secure, and independent





# Empathize With It #3

- The Mason Jar
  - We are more than the sum of our parts
  - We are more than lonely individuals
  - We have stories, traditions
  - The jar shows us a life that was simpler
    - Less depersonalizing



# ***Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics***

## **Challenge the Storyline of the Culture**

Chapter 6



# Deconstruct It #4

## 4. Deconstruct it

- Now that we have entered, understood, and empathized with the storyline
- We have earned the right to challenge it
  - How is the storyline deficient or lacking
  - Can it ever deliver a happy ending
- Paul: The nameless god is lacking
  - How can you worship what you don't know?





# Deconstruct It #4

- *American Idol*
  - There is dissonance in the story
    - If you believe hard enough you can be great
    - Unless you are out of tune
      - Then you can't be great and must leave
    - Also, only one person a year will be voted
      - AMERICAN IDOL!!!!!!!!!!!!



# Deconstruct It #4

- *The DUFF*
  - There is dissonance
    - The point of the movie is be yourself no matter what
      - And it doesn't matter if others won't respect you
  - But the movie ends with everyone respecting her
  - The only happy ending is if the DUFF is respected
    - If she wasn't the story would be sad
  - The movie really says we need love, belonging and respect

# Deconstruct It #4

- The Mason Jar
  - It is deficient because it can't deliver what it promises
  - Does it give you a past? A story?
  - The Jar is seen as something before modern mass production
  - Now it is massed produced and marketed like everything else





# ***Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics***

## **Fulfill the Storyline of the Culture**

Chapter 6



# Existential Cry and Storyline? #5

5. How does the gospel answer this existential cry and storyline?
  - The gospel is the happy ending to their storyline
  - God is the answer to their existential cry
- Paul: That unknown god you seek by worshiping god after god
  - His name is Jesus, He is the only God
  - He will fill that hole you seek to fill



# Existential Cry and Storyline? #5

- *American Idol*

- This story reveals believing in yourself is not enough
- I believe, really believe, but still no success
- I've deluded myself into believing I am good enough
  - Perfect enough to do it on my own
- But what if there was someone who could make you good enough?





# Existential Cry and Storyline? #5

- *The DUFF*
  - The problem is no matter how much we say
    - I don't need respect from others, we still do
    - We need love, belonging and respect
    - But the love people offer has strings, or its toxic
- What if God gives us love, belonging and respect
  - What if Jesus was sent to show that love?

# Existential Cry and Storyline? #5

- The Mason Jar
  - The mason jar shows we long to be apart of something bigger
  - We want to be part of a grand tradition
- Is this why God sent Jesus?
  - So we can follow Him and be apart of a grand family
    - A family that lives for eternity together?



# Speak the Gospel #6

6. Speak the gospel
  - Now that they want the gospel to be true, to fulfill their storyline
  - We can tell them about the gospel
    - Using their metaphors
    - Show how Jesus is a better ending than theirs
  - Paul: Your unknown god is Jesus
    - Paul even quotes their poets





# Speak the Gospel #6

- *American Idol*
  - Just like Simon Cowell gives reality checks to contestants
  - This is what Jesus has done for us
    - Jesus tells us our self-righteousness, our self belief
      - Is deluding us into thinking we are good with God
      - But we are not
  - The only way to be good with God is with help from Jesus



# Speak the Gospel #6

- *The DUFF*

- The message is only you can define yourself
  - But in the end, we still crave love, belonging, respect
- Maybe the issue is you are looking in the wrong people
  - Jesus is the one who defines us
    - He calls me friend
    - He gives me love, belonging, and respect



# Speak the Gospel #6

- The Mason Jar
  - We want to be a part of something grander
  - Jesus is that grander story
    - The son of God, crucified, risen
  - When you accept Christ
    - You are a part of that grand story, that grand tradition





# ***Gospel-Cultural Hermeneutics***

## **The W-Spectrum**

Chapter 6



# The W-Spectrum

- Another model to use for entering challenging and fulfilling
  - Is the W-Spectrum Model
    - This give four (4) approaches to evangelizing other cultures, W1, W2, W3, and W4
  - This model focuses on different types of evangelism



# The W-Spectrum W1

- W1: Workers show how Christ triumphs over the culture
  - “Your storyline is wrong, and you must reject it to follow Christ.”
  - The worker opposes the cultural storyline
  - The worker focuses on you have broken Gods law
    - You must repent
- Example: Jesus with a whip in the temple





# The W-Spectrum W2

- W2: Workers show how Christ replaces the culture
  - “Your storyline is inferior and should be replaced by Christ.”
  - Workers undermine the storyline
  - You have been worshiping wrong things
  - Replace your idols with the one true God
- Example: The rich young ruler, leave your riches



# The W-Spectrum W3

- W3: Workers show how Christ transforms people in the culture
  - “Your storyline is good, but Christ can make it better.”
  - Workers retain and repurpose the storyline
    - Use the broken model of sin
    - “You are broken, but now Jesus can restore you.”
- Example: Woman at the well



# The W-Spectrum W4

- W4: Workers show how Christ completes their culture
  - “Your storyline is heading in the right direction, but you need Christ to fulfill it.”
  - Invite people to follow Christ within their storyline
    - Use the following short model of sin
- “You’re searching for God in the wrong places; that’s why you haven’t found him yet. But now if you come to Jesus, you will find what your culture’s storyline is looking for.”
- Example: Paul in Athens, the unknown god





# The W-Spectrum

- The W-Spectrum can be combined
  - Paul and Barnabas tell the people to
    - W2: Turn from “worthless things to the living God” in Acts 14:15
    - W3: But in vs 17 they tell them that God placed goodness in their story also
- This is not a you must do only one option



# W1/W2 vs. W3/W4

- Notice how W1/W2 are more oppositional
- And W3/W4 are more affirmational
- As mentioned before, there is a time to be confrontational and a time to engage a culture
  - In the Bible we see Jesus confront those who know the scriptures
  - But more affirm those without the scriptures



	W1	W2	W3	W4
Aim of the Evangelist	Oppose the culture's storyline.	Undermine the culture's storyline.	Retain and repurpose the culture's storyline.	Invite people to follow Jesus within their culture's storyline.
Gospel Message	"Your culture's storyline is wrong. You must reject your culture to follow Christ."	"Your culture's storyline is inferior. You must replace it with Christ."	"Your culture's storyline is good. But Christ can make it better."	"Your culture's storyline is heading in the right direction. But you need Christ to fulfill it."
Model of Christ	Christ triumphs over the culture's storyline.	Christ replaces the culture's storyline.	Christ transforms the culture's storyline.	Christ fulfills the culture's storyline.
Model of Sin	Transgression or rebellion	Idolatry	Brokenness	Falling short





# Applying the W-Spectrum

- Let's compare Asian Americans and White Westerners
- The Asian community is coming to Christ more than ever
- The White community is leaving Christ more than ever
- Why
  - Could it have to do with the church's presentation?



# Applying the W-Spectrum

- The Asian Americans story is of
  - Seeking freedom
    - From superstition's
    - From rituals
  - Seeking honor, success, status
- The Christian life fulfills all these things
- Christianity fulfills this story for many Asians



# Applying the W-Spectrum

- Non-Christian Asians are still
  - Captive to superstitions
  - Still driving themselves to success through
    - Education, jobs, status
- W3/W4 your story is not bad
  - But there is a better way
- Maybe this is why so many are turning to Christ
  - Life as a Christian is better than before Christ





# Applying the W-Spectrum

- White Westerners
  - Becoming a Christians means
    - A loss of freedom
      - SO MANY RULES!!!
      - Church EVERY Sunday?!!!
    - Taking on a bunch of superstitious nonsense
- Compared to non-Christian white westerners Christianity is not so good



# Applying the W-Spectrum

- We have been using the W1/W2 models for White Westerners
  - We are combatting not completing their story
  - They see Jesus taking away their happy ending
- Maybe its time we change how we are presenting the gospel to this group of people
  - What is their existential cry?
  - What is their happy ending?



# Wrap-up

- Four things to keep in mind when practicing the hermeneutic
  1. Be sure to demonstrate understanding and empathy for the cultural storyline
  2. Try to use language, idioms, and metaphors from the culture





# Wrap-up

3. Seek to identify the universal existential cry for
  - Love, belonging, freedom, transcendence, purpose, redemption, etc
4. Try to show that Jesus is the
  - True fulfillment of the cultural storyline
  - But in a winsome way that doesn't feel forced
  - This may require some creativity and thought



# Final Thoughts

- Do we constantly look at Movies, TV, Music, Art
  - And our first thought is to criticize it for what is sinful, even evil about it?
  - Should we instead look at it and ask
    - Why and what
      - What are they crying out for?
        - Freedom, security, identity, status, love, hope...
        - How can I show them Jesus is the answer



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