

“The Difference between Culture & Community” COMMUNITY, Pt. 3

GEN 28:3 – “may God increase you & make you fruitful so that you will become a community of peoples...”

- Not all communities are fruitful & increase
- Godly community requires government
- Godly community has standards – we have to have proper, defined by which we live
- Unity is part of community
- Identity requires that we lay down our own for the sake of something greater.
 - We’ve confused significance with singularity – yet a building blends individual parts

Community has to do with a variety of actions & aspects

- Need to distinguish between “culture” and “community” – often confused
- Culture – that which distinguishes life in one group from life in another group
 - How people do life in one sphere is different from the way others live life in another
 - Language, customs, beliefs that distinguishes one people and another
 - “The large scale context of a given society”
 - Need to understand how it factors in to who & how we are
 - Etymology: ‘cultura animi’ (Latin) – an agricultural term meaning “cultivation”
 - Depending on the culture you are a part of, something is always being “cultivated” in you by the culture – ideology, prejudice, etc.
 - Culture doesn’t tell us how you got something or who you got it from – you can have culture without community, but you cannot have community
 - You can have culture devoid of community – you can have no people around you, but you are picking up that which “cultivates” something in you be virtue of what you are immersed in.
 - But community will always bring with it a culture that reflects it.

Church – you can have the “culture” of the church but not have the “community” in the church

- Most believers have adopted the culture of the church without being adopted into the “community” – the relational connection of the church
- 78.4% of polled in America regard themselves as “evangelical Christians” based on how it was defined in the survey
 - Were this true, the moral climate would be completely different
 - 5M would be in church on Sunday in this DC area if this were an accurate reflection of the population
- People are identifying themselves as “Christian” based on a cultural identification rather than a definition reflecting true community.
- Christianity is not a bad culture to relate with; but the only way our lives can reflect what it is about is in a community context
 - Only in community can there be meaningful expression of what our life consists of.
 - Living by a cultural definition and live by it up to the point that we have to encounter and embrace the life that goes on in community.
- Culture is not life giving; community is life giving
 - We like being a part, especially if we can determine of what it looks like
 - A cultural Christian can have his own selection, freedom of choice and independence.
 - “In the church in Antioch there were teachers & prophets...” – they were IN the church; to identify with them required being a part of the local community.
 - Where a person is joined to, THAT person is joined to – committed to & submitted to a body of people is crucial to measuring what they are truly building
- Key differences between culture & community → “interactive”
 - Community marked by love; a culture is marked only by a shared language
 - A culture is defined by the language, not love
 - What makes a community work is love – that is what the early church had
 - Jesus could dwell with a people who loved each other.
 - The mark of covenant is not sitting in a chair next to someone different, it is who you put your feet under the table with.
 - Community must share a common ethos – more than the shared ethnicity of a culture
 - Community draws together; culture isolates
 - Community speaks of “us” and “we”; culture speaks of “them”
 - Culture has not requirements for membership; community has standards

- Culture is easy to join, to log into; community is hard – why most Christians stop at culture
 - Community requires more than “putting up with one another” but to love one another deeply
- Cultural is disposable and convenient; community is precious outside of which there is no life to be found
- Community requires shared understanding – culture doesn’t require nor give opportunity for understanding to occur
- Culture is an artificial flavor – it tastes similarly to the real thing, but isn’t real. It isn’t until you taste the real thing that you can discern what is real.
 - There are higher standards by which we are to measure the real and the artificial
 - We need to have community by which the generations that have never known community to have a taste for it and a true appetite for it.
 - That we would grow to become stronger by virtue of developing community and not simply settle for an enjoyable culture.