

Thinking Biblically about 2020

Week 4: How should Christians think about the racial crisis?

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Brief Review:

(1) We are currently living in a third world “culture” (not country), that is, one that does not base itself on something sacred or transcendent (Rieff).

- **First** (pagan-transcendent) and **second** (religious-transcendent) world cultures have a moral stability, but **third world cultures** do not root social and moral orders on the sacred.
- The result is an “anti-culture” that seeks to abolish the traditions, institutions, and patterns of behaviors that transmit values (and morals) from one generation to the next.

(2) Since God made humanity to be meaning-making beings (desiring something transcendent), all people will devote their lives to some grand story and higher purpose.

- Teleology (design) is dead, self-creation is the goal, and pleasure is the key to eternal life.
- In a third world culture, *religion* (transcendence) is replaced by *politics* (immanence).

(3) Evangelicalism’s response to a third world “culture” has resulted in a four-way fracturing:

(a) Neo-Fundamentalist Evangelical

- *Concerns*: the church’s leftward drift, secular ideologies, and hostility to Christianity
- *Response*: culture war

(b) Mainstream Evangelical

- *Concerns*: the fulfillment of the great commission
- *Response*: primarily evangelistic engagement with some cultural conflict

(c) Neo-Evangelical

- *Concerns*: concerned with global Christian issues as “global evangelicals”
- *Response*: spiritual engagement with serious concern over politicization.

(d) Post-Evangelical

- *Concerns*: a Christianity distinct from the misguided “political Evangelicalism.”
- *Response*: social justice pursuits are core to faithful Christian mission

Implications – Three Types of Churches:

Type A Church – a church comprised of almost entirely 1’s and 2’s

Type B Church – a church comprised of almost entirely 2’s and 3’s

Type C Church – a church comprised of almost entirely 3’s and 4’s

(4) The racial crisis in our country is a manifestation of a third world culture, and the same crisis in the church is a manifestation of the fracturing of Evangelicalism.

- Race has been politicized (e.g., “Black Lives Matter” vs “All Lives Matter” – CRT!)
- Sin has been politicized (e.g., structural/systematic sin vs individual sin)
- Justice has been politicized (e.g., “social justice” vs “biblical justice”)
- Concerns: transcendent politics, false dichotomies, move to the edges, and loss of the gospel.

Application:

- How can Christians transcend the political divide and think biblically about race?