

A NEW DAY

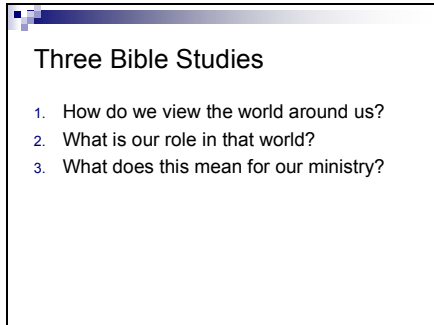
Three Bible Study/ Discussions on our mission in the post-churched context

Part 1: The World Around Us

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Why does this matter?

- The most influential people are the cultural insiders
- When the church is a cultural insider, the Gospel spreads
 - *Where have you seen the truth of this?*
 - *What does this mean for the church's ministry today?*

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Pre-Churched Society

- Traditional Mission Field
- The Church is a cultural outsider
 - Church has no identity, thus no credibility
 - Missionary is an outsider
- So the key is to grow the number of cultural insiders who speak the Gospel
 - These are lay people
 - Sometimes even the un-baptized

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Pre-Churched Society

- What is the church like?
 - The Church is focused on reaching the lost
 - Lots of involvement with the unchurched
 - "Porous" boundary between churched and unchurched
 - Little Structure
 - Several Word gifts (Ephesians 4)
 - Unchurched → evangelist
 - Churched → pastor/teacher
 - Both → apostle, prophet
 - Local Outreach is the work of the laity

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The Churched Society

- This is what many of us grew up with
- The church is an essential part of the community
 - The churched are the cultural insiders
 - The church has great credibility, and is central to the shared history of the culture
 - The churched are now the cultural insiders, knowing and shaping the language and the culture
 - Unchurched are attracted (cultural pull) to the church
- *What marks of a churched society can you remember from years ago?*

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The Church Society

- Pastor is a cultural insider
 - Holds high credibility
 - Knows the language and culture
 - Considered the guardian of the culture
 - Local outreach (Jerusalem, Judea) is the vocation of professionals
 - Respected by unchurched

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The Church Society

- The Unchurched are cultural outsiders
 - They share the church-influenced culture and language
 - They value the church's role
 - The unchurched are invisible (assumption that everyone is a Christian)
 - The church are possibly suspicious of them (those who are not Christian hold something against the church or God)

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The Church Society

- What is the church like?
 - The Church is focused on ministering to church people
 - Focus on structure: buildings, vocation
 - Word Gifts
 - Pastor/teacher
 - Increased professionalization of the witness (only the pastor can do this)

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The Church Society

- *How is the "churched society" church different from the "pre-churched society" church?*
- *Which would you prefer to be part of? Why?*

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** The church (as social institution) is an essential part of the community
- **Reality:** Church has little credibility because it is considered irrelevant to the society

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** The church are key cultural insiders
- **Reality:** The church are now cultural outsiders

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** The unchurched know and share the church influenced language and culture
- **Reality:** The unchurched do not know and share the church-influenced language and culture.

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** The unchurched value the church's role in the society
- **Reality:** They unchurched do not value the church's role in society, and are in fact suspicious of it.

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** Unchurched are culturally attracted to the church
- **Reality:** The Unchurched are not culturally attracted to the church. (Possible exception: The church school.)

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Decreasing assumption:** Everyone is a Christian
- **Reality:** Christians are a minority.
- **Increasing suspicion:** The world's a scary place

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The Post-Churched Society

- **Assumption:** The pastor is a cultural insider (has high personal credibility in the community)
- **Reality:** The pastor is not a cultural insider and does not have credibility in the community as a pastor.

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The Post-Churched Society

- Holdovers from the church culture
 - The Church is focused on ministering to churched people
 - Focus on structure: buildings, vocation
 - Word Gifts
 - Pastor/teacher
 - Local outreach is the vocation of professionals (only the pastor can do this)

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The Post-Churched Society

- *How is the post-churched society similar to the pre-churched society? How is it different?*
- *What does it mean for the church that we are in a post-churched society? How do we minister in a society where we have no credibility as church?*
- *What do you think is the prevailing attitude of churched people toward unchurched people? Is this a help or a hindrance?*

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The Post-Churched Society

- *What evidence do you see in your congregation*
 - *Of "churched society" thinking?*
 - *Of "post churched society" thinking?*
- *Consider the ministries of your congregation*
 - *Where is your congregation's primary focus, inward or outward?*
 - *Which ministries are intentionally designed to minister relationally to the unchurched in your community?*

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Ephesians 4:11-16

- *Which of the three society contexts was Paul ministering in?*
- *How is our society similar to Paul's? How is it different?*
- *Paul lists several Word Offices. Does God still gift people into these offices?*
- *What is God's intended result of giving people into these offices? What are His expectations of His people?*
- *Consider your congregation. What are its expectations of the people God has given into the Word Office? How are the expectations similar or different from those listed here?*

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The World Around Us