

MYTHBUSTERS
“The Irrelevant Church”
August 24, 2008
Pastor Michael Lee
John 17:14-19; (ESV)

STEPS TOWARDS RELEVANCE

1. **The church is to engage the culture** (vv. 15, 18)
 - Church + Distinction – Culture = **Irrelevance**
 - The church must not be afraid to bring culture into the church
 - The church must not be afraid to send people out to actively participate in the culture
2. **The church is to be distinct from the culture** (vv. 14, 16-17, 19)
 - Church + Culture – Distinction = **Powerlessness**
 - The Christian faith must present a viable alternative to what the culture offers.
 - There must be a distinct message, distinct truth, distinct moral code, distinct attitudes

The Challenge:

The church must live in the tension of being culturally “liberal” yet theologically conservative (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

CENTRAL TRUTH:

God calls on the church to be culturally engaged without losing its distinction.

Going Deeper into the Message

1. What makes a church relevant or irrelevant? Which of the two do you consider YNCC to be?
2. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement:
“Many churches mistakenly conceive of themselves primarily as a refuge from culture – a sanctuary or a fortress with high walls intended to keep the culture out.”
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages to the church of keeping the culture out of the church?
4. Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement:
“Some church communities lose themselves in the world and their identity is absorbed completely in the culture. They become so much like the culture that they lose the ability to witness to God’s saving purpose in the world.”
5. Carefully read John 17:14-19. Is it really possible to be “in the world” but not “of the world?” In other words, is it really possible to engage the culture and to be distinct from the culture at the same time? Give specific examples of what this would look like in everyday life.
6. Read Romans 12:1-2. How does the command not to be conformed to this world relate to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some”? How is becoming all things to all people not conforming to the world?
7. There is a line between participating in culture and sinning. What guidelines can you think of that can help believers from crossing that line so that they don’t lose their distinction?

Responding to the Message

8. What one insight from the message seems most personally significant to you right now and what action can you take in the next week to start putting this into practice or to cooperate with God in bringing about this transformation?