

THE CITY OF PERGAMUM

VISION OF CHRIST

AFFIRMATION

CORRECTION

Cultural Idolatry

Demonically-influenced ideologies embedded in social institutions that form us through embodied habits that compete with and compromise our loyalty to Jesus and His Way.

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Ideology

**System of ideas that tell a story about
the good life**

Ideology

Take a partial truth and make it the whole

Ideology

- 1. Take a partial truth and make it the whole**
- 2. Take good truth and make it ultimate**

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

There is mainstream culture, celebrities, fashion, music, modish political activism and a message of self-love, but with a twist of Christianity. Most people stick with mainstream culture because they can have all those things and pre-marital sex. We can see the '...with a twist of Christianity' trend elsewhere. Falwell was representative of the right-wing, business-oriented evangelicals who offer capitalist self-enrichment and hubristic jingoism...with a twist of Christianity.

Then there are progressive Christians who promote the usual left-wing causes...with a twist of Christianity. While different in beliefs, such people share patterns of thought: the former believe secular individualists mysteriously share God's wishes for what should be done with money while the latter think that secular progressives mysteriously share God's wishes for what should be done with bodies. So, if Christianity is such an inessential add-on, why become a Christian? I am not religious, so it is not my place to dictate to Christians what they should and should not believe.

Still, if someone has a faith worth following, I feel that their beliefs should make me feel uncomfortable for not doing so. If they share 90 percent of my lifestyle and values, then there is nothing especially inspiring about them. Instead of making me want to become more like them, it looks very much as if they want to become more like *me*. That, sadly, appears to have been true of Lentz and his celebrity acquaintances.

Ben Sixsmith

Cultural Liturgies

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Peace be with Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:19-21

I want to give you a heightened awareness of the religious nature of many of the cultural institutions we inhabit that you might not otherwise think of as having anything to do with Christian discipleship. By religious, I mean that they are institutions that command our allegiance, that vie for our passion, and that aim to capture our heart with a particular vision of the good life. They don't want to just give us entertainment or an education; they want to make us into certain kinds of people.

So one of the most important aspects of this theology of culture is first a moment of recognition: recognizing cultural practices and rituals as liturgies. We need to recognize that these practices are not neutral or benign, but rather intentionally loaded to form us into certain kinds of people - to unwittingly make us disciples of rival kings and patriotic citizens of rival kingdoms.

James KA Smith

INVITATION

**Jesus' invites us out of cultural idolatry
through the practices of repentance
and truth**

Liturgical Audit

Scripture

PROMISE