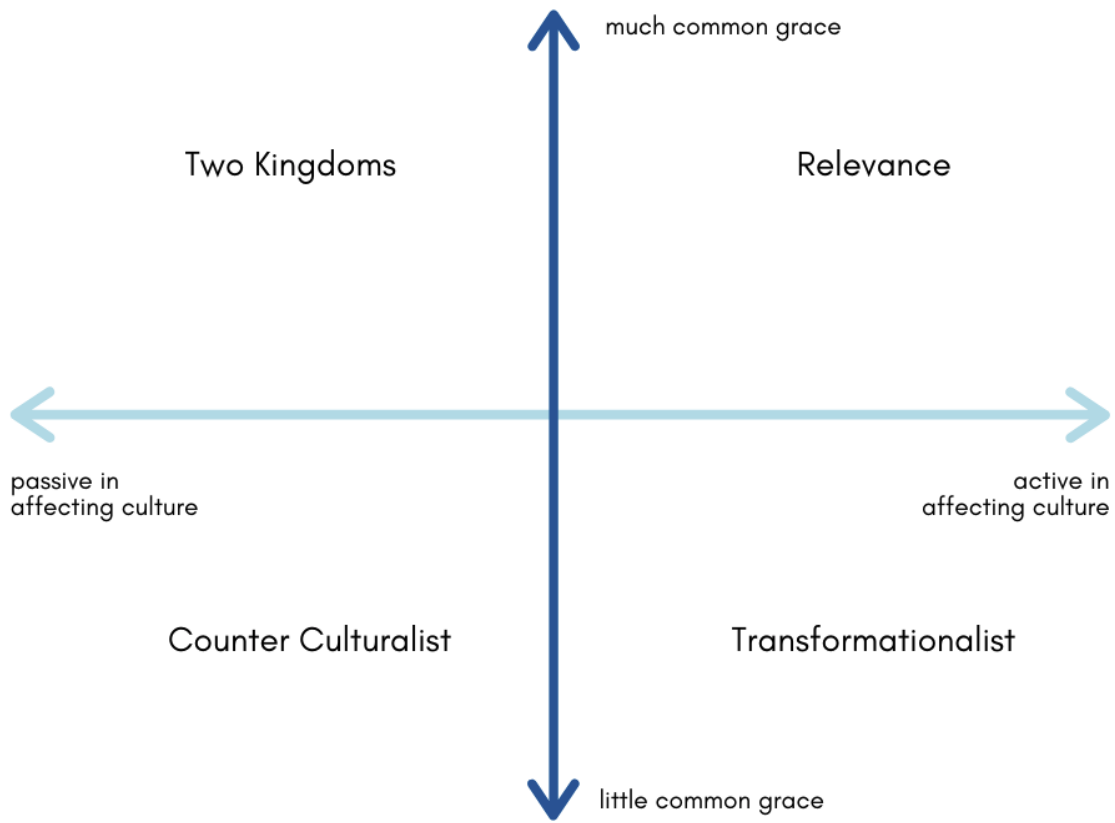


Gospel and Race

Week 5: Transformationalist Model

Four Quadrants Approach delineated by Tim Keller in Center Church
Applied to the context of Gospel & Race discussions within Hope Community Church, a 6-week study



Leader's note: The study passages are not connected 1-to-1 to the Keller material or quadrant under consideration that week. Rather each is biblical testimony regarding the Gospel and how it comes to bear in situations, teachings, parables, etc. which involve ethnicity/race. In that sense, themes of the bible and quadrant may overlap but it should not be assumed that the quadrant directly flows out of the biblical passage.

Introduction Questions

? If you were to make a list of the fundamentals of salvation—what must be believed in order to be saved—what would be on that list? How small could that list get?

Video introduction from Cor: [Week 5 Video](#)

Study the Passage and Discuss

Acts 11:1–18

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

⁴ Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. ⁶ I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. ⁷ Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

⁸ “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

⁹ “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

¹¹ “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. ¹² The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

¹⁵ “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”



Peter was criticized from those within his own tribe. What were their concerns? And how did the story Peter shared suitably answer their concerns?

Possible answers: he ate with the uncircumcised, in other words, he was religiously unclean for having sat with and eaten with this non-Jewish community; the evidence of God’s spirit, the same gift that Peter and the other apostles received upon belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, filling these Gentiles demonstrates God’s acceptance and that, rather than circumcision, marks you for God.



It says that Peter shared a message that would bring salvation. It did. And it also brought the Holy Spirit. How did Peter interpret this event (v. 17)? And how did Peter’s critics respond?

Possible answers: who was I to stand in God’s way? Salvation is for all people; eventually they agreed with Peter and praised God



This passage speaks of a unity and oneness between Jews and Gentiles. The presence of the Spirit was sufficient justification to eliminate further objections to keep them separate. What are the distinctive elements about Christianity that must be believed for salvation and, consequently, result in unity and oneness even across ethnic/racial lines?

Possible answers: Jesus lived, died, rose and will return; faith in Him alone

? Sadly, these distinctives often get added to. What are examples of “objections” (v. 18) that occur even within Christian communities concerning racial/ethnic divides that result in ongoing separation within the church?

Possible answers: language, experiences, preferences, focus on certain topics or sins, doctrines that add to Jesus

Additional Questions About the Paradigm

This week Pastor Cor described the Transformationalist Model. This church is active in influencing culture by acting within it from a distinctly Christian viewpoint. As such, business, government, art, literature, media, science, law, education, homemaking, and more need Christian leadership in light of the increased secularism of the culture. This view can suffer from an unhealthy union of faith and power and has been criticized due to a lack of concern for the “least of these” in our communities.

? Are you able to share any examples (individual or corporate) where the church should be esteemed as a transformationalist community within culture? In other words, what can we appreciate from this quadrant’s contributions?

Possible answers: learn to overflow faith into all areas on life - it affects all areas of life; potential for community leadership, ministering to people in a secular workplace

? Each quadrant has its limitations. What are one or two drawbacks about this quadrant which, if not balanced out by the other quadrants, could prove problematic in addressing issues of race? In other words, what should we challenge regarding this quadrant?

Possible answers: lack of transformation could lead to stoppage of trying, no hope for lost people, everything is a ministry opportunity

? This quadrant has been summarized with the word acting where the church actively engages culture from a distinctively Christian worldview. What other words might you use to describe this quadrant?

Possible answers: transforming, changing, conforming

? Do any of you within this small group sense this quadrant may describe your preferred approach to cultural engagement? If so, are you willing to share what resonates deeply within this quadrant’s approach?

Possible answers: Answers will vary.

Takeaway(s)

How do I want to grow in light of these things?

What am I asking the Lord to do with my heart and life in response to this study?

? You may view your own quadrant more favorably and other quadrants less favorably. Especially if the Transformationalist Model (active/little common grace) is not your primary way of engaging with culture, are you able to identify one aspect which you appreciate regarding their cultural engagement with issues of race?

? Imagine a church that is able to fully express this quadrant when corporately engaging cultural issues of race. How do you think such a church would be described? What difference might such a church make pertaining to issues of race?

? Given the testimony of Acts 11:1–18 how might God want to deepen our hearts and expand our understanding of loving our neighbor, specifically those of a different ethnicity or race?

Accountability

? Share one thing you're thinking about or challenged by this week.

? What is one response you'd like to have regarding today's study that you'd like the group to check in with you next week?