

Nobody Likes You (and that's okay)

White Lake Family Camp 2014

Lecture 1/5

1. Scripture: Psalm 60
2. The secularism of Canada and the Northeastern US
 - a. Balancing act: accurately depict a bad situation, but don't get apocalyptic.
 - b. Northeastern states are among the least religious¹
 - c. Canada: 67% affiliated with Christian religion in 2011, vs. 78% in the USA^{2, 3}
 - d. Another study indicated that employers don't like religious faith to be indicated on an applicant's resume⁴
 - e. Loss of Calvinistic Protestant influence
3. Why doesn't anybody like you?
 - a. Electoral politics? Don't think so.
 - b. Wealth?⁵
 - c. Education?
 - d. A top-down phenomenon⁶ ... Ross Douthat, Charles Murray
 - e. we are witnessing not a thing called "secularization" but a thing called apostasy
4. How unbelief happens
 - a. senses of "secular" according to Charles Taylor *A Secular Age* (and Jamie Smith's "Cliff's Notes" version, *How (Not) To Be Secular*)
 - i. secular1 - this-worldly, not eternal or not sacred
 - ii. secular2 - scrubbed of religion, at least publicly
 - iii. secular3 - conditions in which unbelief is a present possibility for everyone
 - b. we are secular³ people
 - c. sin and secularity (Proverbs 30:7-9; Matthew 13:22; 1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 7:27; 1 Peter 4:17; 1 Timothy 3:15)
 - d. The takeaway: How we live makes it difficult for us *and the world* to believe.
5. What vulnerability *may* look like ...
 - a. biblical data
 - b. historical data⁷
 - c. live possibilities in the Western society in coming years

¹ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153479/mississippi-religious-state.aspx>

² http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/05/08/national-household-survey-religion-us_n_3236721.html;
<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>

³ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142727/religiosity-highest-world-poorest-nations.aspx>

⁴ <http://today.uconn.edu/blog/2014/06/great-resume-too-bad-about-your-religion/> viewed 19 June 2014

⁵ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142727/religiosity-highest-world-poorest-nations.aspx>

⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/29/opinion/29brooks.html?_r=0

⁷ <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/french-jews-leave-israel-increasing-numbers>

- d. do you see a shift? in the 1980s we were working to get Roe v. Wade overturned; now we are “back on our heels”
 - e. The destructive effects of North American de-Christianization
6. The real drama is not the circumstances we’re in: it is how we deal with our circumstances.
 7. Myths of progress/myths of decline
 - a. we need to be less Whig about everything
 - b. three approaches to being a minority
 - c. a double-edged view of history
 8. The Jeremiah agenda (Jeremiah 29:1-14)
 9. Our “banner” is the cross - out of bowshot
 10. An agenda for thriving: four practices: two in common with non-Christian groups, two uniquely Christian: Public Worship, Proximity, Wealth, and Reconciliation

Further reading:

- James Davison Hunter: *To Change the World* (makes the case that electoral politics are “downstream” of cultural change, not the source)
- Ross Douthat: *Bad Religion: how we became a nation of heretics*
- Charles Murray: *Coming Apart* (controversial sociologist chronicles how wealthier classes are becoming more and more separate from lower classes)
- Charles Taylor: *A Secular Age* (giant book: a “phenomenology of secularity” more interesting than it sounds)
- James K. A. Smith: *How (Not) To Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (the Cliff’s Notes version of Taylor)
- *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus* (anonymous early church apologetic work)
- Jonathan Haidt: *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Disagree on Politics and Religion* (fascinating take on morality and psychology that winds up supporting conservatism - from an atheistic perspective!)
- Bat Ye’or: *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam, etc.*
- Karen Ellis: “My People, My People” (article at TheFrontPorch.org)
- William Symington: *Messiah the Prince* (the classic Presbyterian text on the mediatorial kingship of Christ)
- Oliver O’Donovan: *Desire of the Nations* (the most important modern work on mediatorial kingship - without using that term; written by an Anglican theologian)
- Jonathan Sacks: “Creative Minorities” (article *First Things* magazine)
- Aaron Renn: Urbanophile.com (excellent blog on cities and urban issues)