

Session four

Culture's story

Aim

By the end of this session group members should be able to:

- Understand the role culture plays in how we share our faith.
- Have a broad brushstroke understanding of some of our current cultural landscape.
- Begin to consider how to best share our story and God's story in this environment.



Before the session...

Read: Story Bearer – Chapters 9-11

Recap

Reflect on the commitments made at the end of last week's session. Allow group members the opportunity to feedback if anything has happened as a result of the decisions that they made. There might be none, but this is a great opportunity for an update and reminder.

Welcome

Because this session is about the signs of the times, the welcome quiz is an opportunity to guess the year of a number of historical events:

- Death of Julius Caesar - 44BC
- Magna Carta signed - 1215
- Henry VIII becomes king - 1509
- US Declaration of Independence - 1776 Battle of Trafalgar - 1805
- The Titanic sinks - 1912
- First football World Cup - 1930
- Battle of Britain - 1940
- The Beatles release Hey Jude - 1968
- The first email sent - 1971
- One Direction take part in The X Factor - 2010

This session is about considering the implications of the world in which we live and considering how it affects the way in which we see the world and how it impacts other's attitude to the good news of Jesus. It is a really important principle to consider that the fundamental principles of the Gospel never change, but the way in which we communicate it and the aspects we choose to focus on do.



Read...

The Bible – Acts 17: 16-34



Watch...

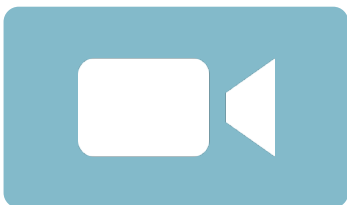
Because Them, Us - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAykd_FhWhQ

Discuss

- When you read the passage in Acts, what do you notice about what Paul does in engaging with the culture he is trying to reach?
- In Story Bearer chapter 9, Phil outlines several aspects of the culture in the lives of Millennials:
 - o Digital Natives
 - o Anti-Institution
 - o Individualism and community

Which of these resonate with you? How do these affect how we talk about faith?

- What are the aspects of our culture that resonate with you from the video, 'Because Them, Us.' If these are true of our world, what are the implications of these for how we share our story?
- Thinking specifically about the digital revolution, how has the rapid development of technology in general and social media in particular affected our worldview?



Watch...

My Phone is my Shepherd - <https://youtu.be/6PdrD3vdS34>

Discuss

Take a large piece of paper (or stick some smaller ones together!) and place it in the middle of the room. As a group take a theme of our culture, either one that has been discussed already e.g. influence of social media, anti-institutionalism or another one that comes to mind or is particularly relevant. Draw a line down the centre of the paper and on one side list the negatives of that cultural trend, or the aspects of it that need to be challenged or questioned, and on the other side list the positives of it and go further to ask how these present opportunities for the good news to spread.

For example – here is a possible negative and positive for social media:

Negatives:

- Can make us compare our lives to one another.
- Can be addictive

Positives:

- Can provide free connection to people all over the world
- Can be a useful tool for spreading hope and good news

Discuss

Take a moment to pray for the world. If you have a globe or a world map, this could be a really useful visual aid. Use the following to guide your prayers:

- Praise God as the king of king, the creator of the universe and the Lord who holds the world in his hands.
- Thank God that he is the Lord of all peoples, nations and cultures and that there is not one square metre of the world that he doesn't know and love.
- Pray for the lost in the world, for aspects of culture that are toxic and need redeeming and that the hopeless in the world would find hope in Jesus.

Pray for the church across the world, in thriving locations, in persecuted places and in your nation, that it would be effective in engaging people across the whole of society with the good news of Jesus.