



The Human Habit: Capturing the Gospel (Outline for Lecture 1): *Nyvall Lectures*¹

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Lecture 1 - The Human Habit: Capturing the Gospel

The Problem: *Culture is Stronger than Creed*

Judaizers are always with us:

1. Reducing the Gospel to ideology (verbal bits.)
2. Insidiously insisting on culture-based prerequisites.
3. Assuming one's own history to be the norm for all.

Specific Examples within the North American Church:

1. Passive roles for laity—the “culture of entertainment.”
2. High-control models of leadership—pastors as lords.
3. Paternal postures of assistance: doing *for* people vs. doing *with* people.
4. Closure motives in dialogue (communicating to convince.)
5. Embrace of colonial modes of mission: rights of entry assumed; enclaves established; institutional forms exported.
6. Affluent assumptions—for example, mono-vocational value of money; dependency on wealth; rights to control assumed-to-be-vested in those who underwrite the costs.

Recognizing the “abnormality” of our uniqueness:

1. Materialism denies spirituality.
2. Mobility denies family values.
3. Individualism (privatization) denies relationship.
4. Technology denies personal inadequacy (cf. Philippians 4:12)

Americans tend to be culturally handicapped:

1. Ethnocentrism (“us” as center of human experience; “them” as needing “us.”)
2. Jingoism (patriotic and often hostile chauvinism.)
3. Linguistic inexperience and narrowness.
4. A tradition for convergent norms.
5. A fondness for drawing fallacious lines of dichotomy: for example, presence/proclamation; Christian/non-Christian; social action/real evangelization.

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