



2014 EFCA Theology Conference
"Christian Faithfulness in a Changing Culture"
Christ Community Church, Leawood, KS
January 22-24, 2014

For some time it has been intellectually acknowledged that we live in a postmodern, post-Christian day. However, with current tsunami-like moral and cultural sea-changes, many are beginning to feel and experience palpably implications previously known only abstractly or experienced vicariously. These tectonic shifts require a different way of thinking, engaging, and speaking, without compromising the Word of God or Christian faithfulness. We need to discern how best to do this with faithfulness and fruitfulness, by God's grace, for the good of His people and for His glory. This is the focus, the goal and the prayer of this Conference.

Preconference: "God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity"

Fred Sanders, Associate Professor, Torrey Honors Institute, Biola University:

http://www.biola.edu/academics/torrey/faculty/profile.cfm?n=fred_sanders

The Trinity, notes Sanders, is grounded in the gospel itself, widely taught and believed by Evangelicals, but not known well or celebrated. With a resurgence of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, with the many varied and weak views of the Trinity, with the expansion of Islam which denies the Trinity, and with the lack of understanding among many Christians of this vital/essential Christian doctrine, it is important for the health and well-being of Christians, the church and the gospel to look again at this truth, as revealed in the Bible and as taught throughout church history. Sanders will navigate through the contemporary Trinitarian maze, teaching and modeling for us that the doctrinal and experiential reality of the Trinity changes everything.

Conference: "Christian Faithfulness in a Changing Culture"

Bible, Theology and Hermeneutics

Richard Lints, Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary:

http://www.gordonconwell.edu/academics/view-faculty-member.cfm?faculty_id=15903&grp_id=8947

In this postmodern, post-Christian day, our understanding of the Bible and theology, and our understanding of life together in the church have been profoundly affected. Lints will address the ways in which our present-day culture has affected our understanding of the Bible, its inerrancy, its authority, its sufficiency, and its interpretation (hermeneutics). In his second lecture, he will address the ways our understanding of the church and its mission have been affected by contemporary culture. Lints will also help us to think through how we go about the task of doing theology, i.e. how we move from the Bible to theology, being sensitive to context and culture, without allowing context and culture to trump the Bible or theology.

Church History

D. Jeffrey Bingham, Associate Dean of Biblical and Theological Studies, Wheaton College:

<http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Departments/Theology/Mission/New-Associate-Dean-of-BTS>

We are living in a day as similar to the pre-Constantinian church as ever has been. Pre-Constantinian Christians approached life and ministry while living in a culture that persecuted them. Yet in this very cultural climate, the church grew. Bingham will reconstruct the life and ministry of these early Christians, for the purpose of extracting pertinent lessons for application to life today.

Response, Contextual Hermeneutics, Cultural Engagement, Faithful Presence

Fred Sanders, Associate Professor, Torrey Honors Institute, Biola University:

http://www.biola.edu/academics/torrey/faculty/profile.cfm?n=fred_sanders

It is one thing to move from the Bible to theology. It is another thing to move from theology to life application while considering the cultural context in which one lives, so that theology is lived and applied in a contemporary, not bygone day. How does one do this faithfully, rooted in the Scriptures and being sensitive to culture, without allowing culture to dictate or mandate what one sees or reads in Scripture? Sanders will teach and model for us the discipline of interpreting a culture and taking action, and, as one of the founders and leaders of the important Theological Engagement with California's Culture (TECC) project, he will use TECC as a running example throughout his message.

Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals:

<http://www.nae.net/about-us/executive-leadership>

How should Christians live and engage in the culture as it becomes progressively post and even anti-Christian? How should the church see its ministry of the gospel inside and outside the church? How should churches cooperate for the common and greater good? In this lecture, Anderson will address the history and future of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), begun in 1942 to facilitate Christian unity, public witness and cooperative ministry among Evangelicals. He will also interact with key biblical, cultural and political issues of the day.

Vincent Bacote, Associate Professor of Theology and Director of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL:

<http://www.wheaton.edu/Academics/Faculty/B/Vincent-Bacote>

We have much to learn about living as a moral minority in this post-Christian day from those who lived life as a Christian and a minority. We need to hear and learn from those fellow Christians who have faithfully lived out the gospel in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances. As we together learn how to live out the gospel in this present day with its challenges, we become a visible manifestation and a powerful apologetic for the gospel.

Panel and Breakout

We will be providing a plenary panel to discuss these important issues. We are also planning to have several breakout sessions.

