



Greater Sydney SDA Conference

Center Church

Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City

Timothy Keller – Zondervan 2012

“How am I doing?” And how ill I know?”

Successful

“This view is on the rise because the expressive individualism of modern culture has deeply eroded loyalty to institutions and communities. Individuals are now ‘spiritual consumers’ who will go to a church only if (and as long as) its worship and public speaking are immediately riveting and attractive.”

Faithfulness

Sound in doctrine, godly in character and faithful in preaching and in pastoring people. Backlash and oversimplification.

Fruitfulness

- The development of Godly character in Christians under your care gardening.
- Faithful and fruitful but the success is determined by the gardener.

- Theological vision is hard, but it is what pastors need.

Gospel

- Gospel is neither legalism or relativism – it is a third way of relating to God through grace. We are saved by faith and grace alone, but not by a faith that remains alone. True grace always results in changed lives of holiness and justice.
- The gospel is good news, not good advice
- The gospel must be contextualized

City

- To reach people we must appreciate and adapt to culture, but we must also challenge and confront it,
- All cultures have God's grace and natural revelation in them, yet they are also in rebellious idolatry. We can under or over adapt to culture.
- Christians should develop appreciative attitudes toward the city
- Christians should become a dynamic counterculture where they live
- Christians should be a community radically committed to the good of their city as a whole
- Features of a church for the city:
 - Respect of urban sensibility
 - Commitment to neighbourhood and justice
 - Integration of faith and work
 - Bias for complex evangelism (requires immersion in the various cultures' greatest hopes, fears, views and objections to Christianity. Requires a creative host of different means and takes great courage.
 - Preaching that both attracts and challenges urban people
 - Commitment to artistry and creativity

Models

- Christ against culture – withdrawal into community of the church
- Christ of culture – accommodationist – affirms God at work in the culture
- Christ above culture – synthetic building on the good in the culture with Christ
- Christ and culture in paradox – dualism (sacred and secular)
- Christ transforming culture – conversionist model that seeks to transform every part of the culture with Christ.
- All the models are right and wrong
- Blended Insights:

Movement

- A church at either extreme will stifle the development of leadership and strangle the church as a corporate body.
- A missional church, if it is to have missionary encounter with Western culture, will need to confront society's idols. (individualism, consumerism)
- A missional church, if it is to reach people in a post-Christian culture, must recognize that most of our more recently formulated and popular gospel presentations will fall on deaf ears. Contextualize skilfully and communicate in the vernacular.

- Will affirm and equip people for mission in every area of their lives
- Understand itself as a servant community – a counter culture for the common good.
- Must be “porous” – expect nonbelievers, inquirers and seekers to be involved in most aspects of the church's life and ministry.
- Practise Christian unity on the local level as much as possible.

Movements

- Marked by a compelling vision
- Generous flexibility
- Spontaneously produce new ideas and leaders grow from within

The church as an organized organism – being both institution and movement