



Consumerism & Church

Introduction

Me: Pastor/Planter/Research/EC

Why consumerism: church plant and
research D.Min

Suggestion: Consumerism as religion

Introduction

Outline of seminar:

- ▶ 30 mins content, then discussion Q&A
- ▶ How is consumerism like a religion
- ▶ Some key challenges/elements to all churches (E/C mapping later if time)

Introduction

Outline of seminar:

- ▶ Map against church experiences
- ▶ Suggested responses we might need (& E/C correlations if time)
- ▶ Q&A: resource, rebut, clarify

Consumer Religion?

Capitalism

- ▶ Economic system
- ▶ Inherently evil?
- ▶ or Culture around it?

Consumer Religion?

Consumerism

- ▶ Culture built around/on capitalism
- ▶ Relationship to our economics
- ▶ Scarcity
- ▶ Branding/Lifestyle
- ▶ Freedom/Choice/Experience/Being
- ▶ Meaning of life/purpose/human etc
- ▶ No set beliefs but way of relating beliefs to practices: consumer liturgies

Consumer Religion?

Commodification

- ▶ Food from nowhere and clothes made by no-one
- ▶ Beliefs and practices are separated
- ▶ Rebel Sell: Fragmented from others
- ▶ Beliefs holding believers
- ▶ Believers now holding beliefs
- ▶ Bricolage: resist (evil), shallow (deepen)

Key Issues

Human Nature

- ▶ *Theological Anthropology*
 - ▶ Consumer Human Nature vs Christian notions
 - ▶ Structure to Agency
- ▶ *Soteriological Telos*
 - ▶ Direction, purpose, reason for life
 - ▶ Christian understanding of history

Key Elements

Human Nature

- ▶ Auto-poiesis: self creation
- ▶ Choice
- ▶ Freedom
- ▶ Participation (faux)
- ▶ Being: prior to everything
- ▶ Separation of being and doing etc
- ▶ Consuming = action

Key Elements

Meaning/Purpose of Life

- ▶ Happiness: destination is old age, living somewhere nice
- ▶ Endless being, avoiding commitment to find myself
- ▶ Escape: from others and dependence
- ▶ HS makes this real in my life
- ▶ Christianity as private lifestyle choice

Church Encounters

Blue print ecclesiology: consumer idealizations

Post-church: anti institution naivety & other axiomatics, Jesus and not Church etc

Consuming mission: vs doing mission

Church as therapy: to find consumer self

Church Encounters

Church Fundamentalism: control of beliefs and identity

Private God space/Loss of Public: church as religious lifestyle, experience, in spaces I want

Worship: about self creation rather than surrender

Counters to Consumerism

Bricolage: deepen through tradition, liturgy,
pluralism of church

Practices: disciplines, practices that form me as
person, and connect with beliefs

Conversion: Agency exchange, consumer self
for being in communion (church)

Counters to Consumerism

Conversion: Eschaton vs Historicism

Political Worship: Polis and Oikos, all spaces aren't equal, genuine third space

Conversion: consumer mission for mission of Holy Spirit

Cruciform: typology vs metaphors

E/C - Struggling

Sociological: lack of theological, captive to new metaphors

Axiomatics

Anti institutional/Leadership Crises

Worship as consumer therapy

E/C - Struggling

Relevance & Participation: consumer versions

Crises of knowing and being: power

New exclusion: style, location

De-conversion vs Conversion

EC - helpful

Theology: Gospel more than propositions
for heaven when we die

Experimenting: new forms, retrieving,
exploring plurality of the church, deep
ecumenism

Connection: historical and international

EC - helpful

Generous: depth of body of Christ

Leadership: Something between benevolent dictator, or slave.

Rediscover: Traditions, resources of Body

Mission: Of Church as public of the HS
mission within the economy of God

EC - helpful

Marathon: No quick fix, new understanding of history and eschaton

Relevance: contemporary incarnation and conversion

Human: Better not worse people

More Resources

www.jasonclark.ws

www.vineyardchurch.org

www.deepchurch.org.uk

www.emergent-uk.org