

March 4, 2018
Power and Politics
Taken From James Hunter, How to Change the World

How are we to deal with the problems of an eroding culture?

The answer has been to primarily politicize our concerns.

People then think that what matters most is the direction of your politics.

Are you conservative? Liberal?

What is never challenged is the idea that Christian faith and cultural engagement are given in mostly political terms.

“Precisely because culture is always most powerful a force when it is most taken for granted, it brings into relief just how powerful a force politicization is in our time.”

Problem: the public witness of the church today has become a political witness.

Democracy resides in an elected political class.

The state is where the real power resides and it is largely non-elected entities.

1. The state is not subjected to voters
2. Most problems we care about do not have political solutions

Irony: for politics to be about more than power, it depends upon a realm that is independent of the political process. The deepest irony is that the Christian faith has the possibility of autonomous institutions and practices that could be a source of ideals and values that could elevate politics to more than a quest for power. Instead, by nurturing its resentments, they become functional Nietzscheans, participating in the very cultural breakdown they so ardently strive to resist.

Rethinking Power— The question for the church is not about choosing between power and powerlessness, but rather, how will the church and its people use the power that they have.

The two tasks of the church:

1. To disentangle the life and identity of the church from the life and identity of American society.
2. The church and for Christian believers to decouple the “public” from the “political.”