



FOREIGNERS & EXILES

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THE STRANGE PEOPLE

1 PETER 1:13-16

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship...

There are no ordinary people.

You have never talked to a mere mortal.

CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

# Cultural Engagement

## Do we Separate?

- Holy huddle, no engagement

## Do we Accommodate?

- Private faith, mushy spirituality, no engagement

## Do we Subjugate?

- Political or social change, build God's kingdom on earth

Notice the significance of the new birth for Christian social identity. Christians do not come into their social world from outside seeking either to accommodate to their new home (like second generation immigrants would), shape it in the image of the one they have left behind (like colonizers would), or establish a little haven in the strange new world reminiscent of the old (as resident aliens would). They are not outsiders who either seek to become insiders or maintain strenuously the status of outsiders.

Christians are the *insiders* who have diverted from their culture by being born again. They are by definition those who are not what they used to be, those who do not live like they used to live. Christian difference is therefore not an insertion of something new into the old from outside, but a bursting out of the new *precisely within the proper space of the old*.

Miroslav Volf, *Soft Difference*

Christians are in an important sense insiders. As those who are a part of the environment from which they have diverted by having been born again and whose difference is therefore internal to that environment. Christians ask, "Which beliefs and practices of the culture that is ours must we reject now that our self has been reconstituted by new birth? Which can we retain? What must we reshape to reflect better the values of God's new creation?"

Miroslav Volf, *Soft Difference*



As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

(1 Peter 1:14)

# Do Not Fashion

What Peter means here by saying “DO NOT FASHION or DO NOT CONFORM” yourself to evil desires is an expression that means: do not form your outward life around something that is not representative of your inmost true nature.

desire.

desire.

...passion, longing, aspiration, want, love