

## Cultural “Soil Analysis”

Compiled by Kirk Irwin

### I. Chapter 2, Finding Common Ground, by Tim Downs

Quote:

“Church historians have noted that the primary attack on the gospel has changed from century to century. In the eighteenth century, it’s said, Truth died. In the nineteenth century, God died. As a result, in the twentieth century, Man died. Christians have often arrived at the battlefield a generation late, eager to defend the faith but equipped to counter a foe who has long since withdrawn from the front lines. A formidable new foe surprises us, armed with unfamiliar weapons, and we retreat in haste to rearm and form new strategies, only to return and repeat the process a generation later. Hindsight has a remarkable acuity; the challenge is to recognize the current foe and anticipate his future replacement **today**.”

Questions:

1. What do you think of Downs’ statement? Is he right? Why or why not? Can you give examples?
2. What do you think is the current “formidable new foe” that Downs’ refers to?
3. Are we currently thinking about things that the world has long since answered adequately and abandoned? Should we be changing our conversations in this group here and talk about what the world is actually talking about? Or should we just abandon our own lines?
4. What do you think is the future “replacement” of the current culture? How can we anticipate the change? Or can we actually cause the change?

### !! Chapter 2, Finding Common Ground, by Tim Downs

Quote:

“I believe that the enemy’s current plan of attack is the most insidious that Christians have ever faced. Unable to destroy our forces directly, the enemy is seeking to destroy the ground on which we stand. He is seeking – with great success – to render Christian belief impossible.

Consider what happens to the Christian faith when certain basic elements of our soil are depleted:

**If I no longer believe...**

**...then I will believe...**

*that history can be objectively known,*

*that nothing can be known about Jesus.*

*that words convey an author’s meaning,*

*that the Bible can be made to say anything.*

*that Truth can exist,*

*that sin is just a cultural concept.*

*that writers can escape his cultural biases,*

*that the Bible contains no timeless truths.*

These are precisely the beliefs that are rapidly dominating our postmodern culture.”

Questions:

1. What do you think of Downs’ analysis? Is he right or wrong? Why or why not?
2. What would you add as an artist? What are artist’s today creating that is reflective of the current cultural “soil”?
3. What can we do (i.e. think about, talk about, create visually/creatively) to wisely engage the current culture? How can we be effective cultural influencers? GET PRACTICAL AT THIS POINT!!!