

Book of the Month

October 2011

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

To Change the World:

The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity In the Late Modern World.

James Davison Hunter. Oxford University Press. 2010.

We Christians want to change the world. It's part of our spiritual DNA. The last thing Jesus commanded before returning to his heavenly Father was that we should go into all the world and make a difference. But how? *How* do we change the world? James Davison Hunter, professor of Religion, Culture and Social Theory at the University of Virginia, has written a serious book to help evangelicals think more clearly about this question. He reminds us of what we already know: genuine cultural change is going to require more than saving souls, electing the right candidates or creating special interest movements. Such efforts are admirable and have their place, but they do not go nearly far enough.

Hunter examines the efforts of believers through the centuries (the Christian Right, the Christian Left, and the Neo-Anabaptists) who have sought to change the world. After highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of these movements, he proposes an incarnational model of ministry, calling us to practice a strategy of "faithful presence" in the world today. More than traditional evangelism is needed to bring about deep change in a culture. The church must send "missionaries" into all realms of social life (media, medicine, education, art, business, etc.) to serve as salt and light in the name of Jesus. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this type of ministry when he wrote to the exiles in Babylon to *seek the welfare of the city... and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jeremiah 29:7).*

Pastor Stan Key