

## **The Secret to the Universe**

### **Values that do not change**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Whatever your heritage I am so glad you are part of this community
2. It is folk like you who are making a difference in the world

#### **Definition of Culture:**

1. A church's culture represents the intersection of three values we steward:
  - God's Presence
  - Who you are
  - The distinctives of this church
2. The contrast in the middle of summer between outside and inside a mall
3. People come here and God puts them together again

#### **Hebrew Mindset:**

1. The bible is a product of the Hebrew mind
2. The Hebraic mindset has been replaced – it is now merely a caricature
3. The Hebrew is concerned with practice, the Greek with knowledge.
4. The Hebrew thus extols the moral virtues as the substance and meaning of life
5. The Greek subordinates them to the intellectual virtue
6. We insist on rendering everything into logically consistent patterns, on systematizing it, on organizing it into tight, carefully reasoned theologies.
7. We cannot live with the Hebraic idea that God is simply indescribable and that God's Book doesn't lend itself to systematization.
8. Abraham Heschel – *"To try to distill the Bible, which is bursting with life, drama, and tension, to a series of principles would be like trying to reduce a living person to a diagram"*
9. We relentlessly attempt to organize everything into manageable intellectual blocks and structures.
10. In our quest to turn Scripture into a systematized textbook of theological answers about God, we have ended up distorting its meaning time after time.
11. *"To the Jewish mind, the understanding of God is not achieved by referring to a Greek way to timeless qualities of Supreme Being, to ideas of goodness and perfection, but rather by sensing the living acts of His concern, to His dynamic attentiveness to man. We speak not of His goodness in general but of His compassion for the individual man in a particular situation"*
12. *"The Greeks learned in order to comprehend. The Hebrews learned in order to revere. The modern man learns in order to use"* – Heschel
13. In our culture, we have commercialized everything, including Christianity.
14. The gospel is to *"heal the sick, cast out demons, and make disciples"*
15. Over 30 years of pastoral ministry, I have seen that what one generation is asked to tolerate, the next generation accepts and the next generation participates

### God's Presence:

1. *Exodus 33:15-16: "your Presence does not go with us do not lead us up from here – for how can it be known that your people and I have found grace in your sight, except you go with us? Is it not by Your going with us that distinguishes us from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"*

### You !!:

1. Every one of you are incredibly important to the future of this church
2. You shape tomorrow's church
3. Many Christians think of the church as a *Cruise Ship* and not a *Battleship*
4. Poem by Dr Zeus

### The Distinctives of God:

1. The culture we have can either produce life or remain stagnant
2. Story of boy in youth detention house *"I don't want to go home"*
3. NASA changed culture and bacteria began to live
4. Scientists in Israel – changed culture and a date palm germinated

### Shifting Culture:

1. How do we shift a culture?
2. Scripture has many insights for us
  - a. Memorial Stones after crossing Jordan - *Joshua 4:21*
  - b. First Passover meal *Exodus 12:11*
  - c. *Deuteronomy 6* – recall the faithfulness of God
3. The Touareg *"may you stay in one place the rest of your life"*

### The Distinctives at Bellevue Church:

#### **a. Heart to Heart:**

- Live heart first because a mind will reach a mind – but a heart will reach a heart
- One of our distinctives has to be people who live heart to heart
- Programs and activities can never replace a heart to heart connection

#### **b. A Heart for the Harvest:**

- We must have a heart for the harvest because the harvest will not self-reap
- We must have a love for people and a concern for their eternal destination
- It is not about us – it is about those you love and those you know
- God never said *"Go into the church"* – *He said "go into all the world"*
- Connect everything to a soul e.g. the sound man / in the nursery etc.

### A Final Challenge:

1. Where is your heart?
2. Do you need a heart shift?
3. It is my prayer that you grab hold of the values of BC and help us build the future