Session 02.01 - Identity

Lab: Society and Nation - IDENTITY
Date: 6/10/26
Room: Apolonia
Facilitator: Jim Memory
Note-taker: Jim Memory
Approximate number of participants: 25

1. Key insights

Q1 What are the consequences in society and in our churches of our current obsession with identity?

- Fear in church for LGBTQ imposing their beliefs in certain countries. It's important to go to church as individualism keeps on rising and the youth are lacking connections/values. Decline in religion is creating a social vacuum for many people. How to define identity, identity gives a sense of belonging. (Who do you want to be?)
- People value an identity because it gives a sense of ownership yet it also creates division. It's important because without identity you can not have a conversation with other people; for example explaining why you believe what you believe.
- All denominations have their own identity and view it as the best one. Identity needs a biblical foundation. We receive His identity.
- In Ukraine, language is fundamental to identity. Ukrainians don't want to listen to Russian for example.
- Identity issues can become very negative. There are a lot of conflicts revolving around identity. It can generate division, polarisation due to too many or not enough boundaries. You can also end up being excluded due to your identity because you are not of the right denomination, for example.
- Identity reveals the need for something more, you look for one because you look for security, belonging and more. Identifying why you need identity helps in finding it.

Q2: What are the essential features of our Evangelical identity?

- Evangelical identity is different in different places. Love your neighbour, having a personal relationship with Jesus and living out your faith in Christ.
- We agreed Bebbington's Quadrilateral established definitions were also quite good.

- Do we need a definition of Evangelical? The group said it could help but also could hinder. A sense of belonging has always been there. How has individualisation filtered into our churches and our beliefs? Our national identity will overpower our Christian identity.

Q3: What Scriptural and theological resources can help us in this identity-obsessed age and how can we serve our churches by wrestling with this issue in our preaching and discipleship?

- 1 John 4:18. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."
- Don't be afraid, lacking a relationship with God means a lack in identity.

2. Challenges identified

- Fear a driving force in identity politics - challenge of 1 Jn 4:18 is for love to be our prime motivation
- Western culture is obsessed with identity - a sign of insecurity. Knowing our identity in Christ can be a powerful liberation from this obsession and insecurity.

3. Useful resources

- Douglas, Alexander (2025), *Against Identity: The Wisdom of Escaping the Self*, Penguin: London
- Trueman, Carl (2022), *Obsession with Self-Identity, Sexuality, and Rewriting History: How We Got Where We Are Today*, C.S. Lewis Institute https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/broadcastTalks26_Trueman.pdf