

# 7 Ways the Church Can Foster a Christian Culture in Our Nation

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead proves that a new heaven and new earth inauguration already began. Jesus, as the first fruits, and His saints will follow at the climax and culmination of history and full manifestation of the new heavens and earth when our bodies are also resurrected in the last day (see 1 Cor. 15:20-23).

The following realms of society were reframed at the resurrection because of the lordship of Christ:

## **Politics**

Jesus is the true Caesar: “‘These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus'” (Acts 17:6b-7).

Since the church was spreading among the Gentiles (not merely limited to the Jews) Rome had a huge problem on its hands, because their empire was held together politically with Caesar worship. Now thousands of people were proclaiming that there was another King who was Lord of everyone else, including Caesar. This is what eventuated in the violent reaction of Rome against the church.

## **The Workplace**

### **Business**

The church functioned as a benefactor community for all people in its community:

“As we await the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory

of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:13-14).

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you constantly to affirm, so that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to everyone" (Titus 3:8).

These two passages elucidate the fact that the early church saw themselves as a community of people called to serve and better their community. This reframed even the workplace and the purpose of wealth as each believer used their time, treasure and talents to serve their city and extend the reign of Christ through a practical demonstration of His love.

## **Family**

Their leaders modeled a family unit in submission to Christ as the head. Read Ephesians 5 :21-33 and 1 Timothy 3:5, which gives as a primary qualification for church elders the call to be faithful to their families: "For if a man does not know how to manage his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?"

Also, Ephesians 5 speaks about a husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church in the midst of a Roman-Greco culture that generally devalued women and used marriage only as a way to have children and perpetuate their family legacy (romance was often connected to arrangements outside the bounds of traditional marriage); hence, the command to love their wife connected both romance and sacrifice in the marriage, which revolutionized Western civilization.

## **Education**

They honored the Scriptures as the primary way of equipping and maturing the saints starting from childhood.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Scripture was used to catechize new believers and disciple their children (see also Deut. 6:6-9) which eventually became the impulse to create a "grand synthesis" that universities (starting in about the 11th century) utilized, in their attempt to orbit all truth and every discipline around theology and the study of the Bible.

## **Philosophy**

The apostle Paul challenged the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God demonstrated in Jesus (see Paul before the Areopagus in Acts 17, in which he challenged Greek polytheism, idolatry and quoted their famous poets to make a case for worshipping the one true God). Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-24 to see how the gospel of Jesus challenged the philosophy of the times.

In Colossians 2:8-10, Paul says: " Beware lest anyone captivate you through philosophy and vain deceit, in the tradition of men and the elementary principles of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him lives all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all authority and power."

## **Religion**

Jesus turned the religious world on its head when He challenged the dark powers of the false deities, worshipped in Roman-Greco culture. As we see in Matthew 16:16-19, Jesus said He was building His church upon the rock that was next to the goat god, Pan, which was connected to the cave or pit called the gates of hell (into which people were alleged to be thrown alive if they did not appease the goat god Pan in their immoral rituals and worship).

We also see Paul challenging polytheism and witchcraft in Acts chapters 14 and 19 in his gospel messages.

## **Art**

Paul recharacterized art and poetry by renaming and reframing their statue to the unknown God and giving meaning to popular Greek poetry (see Acts 17).

A new genre of music was created for the Gentile world.

Ephesians 5:18-19 says: "Do not be drunk with wine, for that is reckless living. But be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

## **Music**

Paul taught the church to make use of the Hebrew Psalms, as well as the creation of new hymns and spontaneous spiritual songs of the heart, which created a new genre of music for the Gentile world.

All of the above demonstrated that the church—as a new nation—was not focused merely on going to heaven but rather introduced a new vision for life on the earth related to family, politics, business, music, art and philosophy as the "new man" (see Eph. 2). The church was called to envision and walk out a new creation (see 2 Cor. 5:21) that began at the resurrection and ascension of the true King of kings and Lord of all—Jesus Christ.

As they modeled the kingdom of God in their own subculture, they were able to export it to every aspect of the communal life of the city they were immersed in.

In light of this article, we need to ask ourselves some questions:

Do we embody and celebrate biblical values or the values of

the secular humanistic worldview?

Are we a disciple of Christ who integrates our faith in the workplace, or merely a Sunday church attender?

Should churches empower disciples for the workplace, or only the church place?