

Can Truly Biblical Leadership Turn Our Culture Back to God?

In this two-part article, my objective is to encourage the church to go from mere talk to culture shift within and without the church.

As I begin, we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

What is the culture of our family, church and/or organization?

Is it a healthy culture that walks out its biblical values, or a dysfunctional culture that does not correspond to Scripture and its missional perspective?

Do we have a robust application of Scripture that reinterprets and reframes our surrounding culture?

Before we attempt to answer these three questions, we have to define three key terms:

What is a leader?

What is culture?

What and how is culture shift?

What Is Biblical Leadership?

What is a leader? A biblical leader is a person who has influence and exerts responsibility for the sake of others; hence, a kingdom leader is really a servant.

Mark 10:42-45 says:

But Jesus called them together, and said, "You know that those who are appointed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great

among you must be your servant, and whoever among you would be greatest must be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Consequently, the biblical locus that defines Christian growth and maturity does not comport with the contemporary American CEO model of top-down visionary (directive) leadership but with what Jesus described as (bottom-up) model of servanthood. (The *servant* is considered great in God's kingdom, not the one being served; see Luke 22:27.)

Culture

What is culture? Culture is an unspoken or spoken value system and its concomitant methodologies that are expected and celebrated in an organization or entity.

How Does a Culture Shift?

In order to establish and/or shift a culture, those recognized as leaders within an entity or system need to embody and model the values, so they become the norm.

1. The perceived leaders of a church need to walk out the values celebrated and taught, or it will frustrate the church and reduce the values to nothing more than abstract propositions. Consequently, it takes "buy in" from those within the primary circles of influence of the lead pastor. And "buy in" is only demonstrated when said circle of influence function as exemplars at the ground level among the people.

We have to thus conclude that culture shift takes place, commensurate to the ability of each concentric circle, expanding its influence to other circles of influence within the church.

(For example, if only the new Christians and new disciples are

excited about the vision and the older recognized leaders lag behind—the church culture will shift from anticipation and passion to cynicism and frustration, resulting in a loss of momentum.)

The New Testament Pattern of Church Leadership

The early church framed their activities initially with the apostles' doctrine:

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

This enabled them to frame every subsequent activity with a biblical worldview.

In addition to this framework was the fact that their focus was missionally based on Acts 1:8:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

As a result, they planted the gospel in cities and went house to house—not limiting their Christian activity and proclamation to meetings in buildings (we now call churches) as we do on Sundays today.

Planting the gospel in a city also implied the application of the lordship of Jesus in every aspect or realm of a polis or city.

As we examine the Book of Acts, we observe that all of the effective gospel activity took place outside of a religious building in their communities except for the initial church services in the Jewish Temple.

In Every Realm!

Furthermore, in reading the biblical narrative, we see a reframing of politics, business, education, philosophy, religion, family, art, music at the inauguration of the post-ascension New heavens and new earth that began to manifest the reign of Jesus on earth.

Read part 2 next week as I expand on the realms of society that were reframed at the resurrection because of the lordship of Christ.