

The Church Learns a Lesson From Miley Cyrus

Miley Cyrus is not an invitation for condemnation, church. Her recent antics are a call for us to assess and evaluate what we're doing as the church—and what we are communicating about God to the next generation.

God is extreme. We need not make Him that way—He is because He is. I have to wonder what Miley was told about this radical God. Perhaps Miley's extreme behavior has a root in her not being exposed to the extreme God of Scripture and instead, receiving religion or a feel good Gospel. I can only wonder...

Think About Who God Truly Is

Is He is a nice Sunday school story? Is He a list of dos and donts? Is He morality and politics? Is He good deeds? Is He missions trips, sermons, music, and church activities?

Or He is burning love, untamable power, unpredictable, fearful, and altogether glorious? Is He stoic, detached, and not interested, or He is the One who parts oceans so that His people can step into their supernatural destinies?

A Generation Detached From the Testimony

Judges 2:10, I believe, is a prophetic passage for the hour in which we live: "When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers (The Joshua Generation), another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel."

The Joshua generation *must* connect with the Judges generation, otherwise we experience what took place in the Book of Judges—a generation will emerge that does not know the Lord because they are unexposed to the miraculous work He has done. Signs and wonders are not an end, but they do live up to their titles. Signs point to greater realities and wonders stir awe,

fear, and trembling. Communicating testimony of God's power is ultimately reminding a generation that God is real and God is alive!

I take a tremendous risk when I say this, but I believe we are doing the next generation a disservice when we present a version of Christianity that is divorced from signs, wonders, miracles and the testimony of God's supernatural exploits in Scripture, in history, in our world, and in our lives. We are witnessing this in Christianity right now, even as I type. Why? We are more interested in doing what's always been done instead of connecting with Who God is and what the Spirit is doing NOW. We've built structures around sermons and programs instead of a family around Person, Presence and Testimony—3 of the key things that characterized Israel and the early Church.

How in the world does this relate to Miley? Hang in there and track with me. Miley has Christian roots, people.

Miley Was Not a Pagan

After all, she is not a heathen or pagan. She is not an alien to the faith. Regardless of what believers call her, she did not come from a completely secular history, but rather, some form of a faith environment, thus placing her in the "Christian community."

I know this is not a comfortable statement. It's not comfortable for me as one who longs for the body of Christ step into full inheritance. Why? Because Miley Cyrus and other entertainers with Christian roots reveal the strong possibility of a major flaw in the system.

Miley came from some form of "Christian" environment. She started out clean as Hannah Montana. She started to Party in the USA and basically, everything went downhill from there. At one point, she was vocal about her faith in Jesus Christ and now, she is engaging in Twitter-conversation, promoting the beauty of a cosmic accident, Tweeting a photo with the

following quote: “You are all stardust. You couldn’t be here if stars hadn’t exploded ... So forget Jesus. Stars died so you could live.”

What we saw on MTV was a manifestation of what has been going on behind the surface of Miley Cyrus.

An Uncomfortable Trend in “Church Kids”

There are undeniably several factors that played into her MTV shenanigans, so powerless, boring Christianity is certainly not THE ultimate culprit. Miley made choices—poor ones at that. We don’t shy away from sin; at the same time, we cannot spend all of our time condemning the sinner. We need to take this opportunity and evaluate what’s going on.

Miley is another name on a lengthening list of “church kids” who have gone the opposite direction of their roots, and in fact, have demonstrated increasing levels of radical public immorality. It started with Madonna. Disenfranchised with the Catholic church, Madonna pushed the barriers with her sexual behavior (which now seem tame compared to what is on TV today), along with her controversial exploration of Catholicism (*Like a Prayer*, concerts, etc.).

Brittany Spears followed suit. Katy Perry kissed a girl, liked it, and decided to keep pushing the envelope.

And most recently, you have Miley Cyrus.

What Type of Church Are We Giving the Next Generation?

I must return to my Judges 2 hypothesis. What I want to focus on here is extreme behavior. Could it be that the brand of Christianity these young women were exposed to was based on rules, regulations, tradition, limitations, and systems? If so, then they were not properly “churched” at all. The church of Jesus Christ is family. The Kingdom is about fathers and mothers, not tyrannical leaders, restraining people from fulfilling their destinies.

The church is about creating an environment where Jesus is the center, sermons are allowed to take a backseat to the move of the Holy Spirit, miracles are normal, unity is pursued, families are strengthened, destinies are realized, and callings are confirmed. The church is about releasing, not restraining. Why? Because releasing people means releasing the possibility of societal transformation, global revival, and mass evangelistic breakthrough.

I wonder what would have happened if the church and Christian community truly recognized the call of God on these women, and rather than restraining them, released them in the power, anointing, and authority of the Holy Spirit—and not simply to go make a Christian album or sing on the worship team.

Let's get real. We need Spirit-filled prophets and dreamers in the media, in the entertainment industry, releasing His words and His purposes into the world. Entertainers tend to have a prophetic edge. They see, and in turn, create. What would happen if this creative, artistic passion was actually championed by the church—not just to put on pageants for the youth group or help with the praise team, but what if the church invested in seeing a generation invade the arts, bringing the excellence, creative edge, and supernatural power of the Kingdom into their craft?

Ministry Redefined

This is ministry. We need to face it if we want to see the Earth filled with His glory and transformed by His gospel. We must equip the saints, but we also must evangelize the world. Let's combine them, shall we? Let's equip the saints to evangelize the world—and let's broaden our vision of what evangelism looks like. It always ends with knees bowing and kingdoms trembling before the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's an extreme vision in and of itself. It's so much more than "Just As I Am" and decision cards. It's about the dead coming to life because a corpses spirit came into a collision

with the extreme power of the Holy Spirit.

There's no compromise with this glorious gospel and there can never be. However, we MUST feed a generation again, not with our stale sermons, but on the testimony of the God Who lives, Who acts *today*, Who performs miracles, Who transforms regions, Who dispels darkness over entire cities, Who filled us with His very Spirit, Who has given us an inheritance that will take all of eternity to unlock, Who has transformed our very DNA to reflect His nature, Who meets us in the place of intimacy and releases supernatural dreams into our hearts, Who brings impossibilities to bow before the Name of Jesus, and Who is not satisfied in closing out history until heaven truly invades Earth.

This sounds extreme to me, and this is the Truth we need to be feeding the next generation on if they are going to be extreme for the kingdom.

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