

# What Christians Can Learn From Gay Activists

Dear Church Leader,

Did you know you have the ability to change culture by equipping those people sitting in your pew? Let me explain.

Our culture is moving farther and farther away from its Christian foundations. From where I sit, that is a situation that actually can be changed, but those who have the ability to change it—evangelical church leaders—refuse to do so. Let me explain why I believe this.

Six years ago there was a research study done by George Barna Research. It revealed the following disturbing fact: 84 percent of 18-29 year-olds have no idea how the Bible applies to their field of career interest.

In 1975, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ and Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With a Mission, met each other for the first time. When they met each other, they shared how God had spoken to them that very week about the key to impacting the culture for Jesus Christ.

They said God revealed to them, “If we are going to impact our culture for Jesus Christ, it must be through the seven mind-molders, mountains or gates to the culture. These are government, business, education, arts and entertainment, media, family and the church. These areas most define the values and beliefs that are adopted by people.”

Bill and Loren were correct in their statement. Their solution wasn't. That's why we have lost so much ground since 1975. You see, they tried to disciple young people who had very little influence in these seven areas. So, attempting to impact these seven areas through the church mountain really had little

effect.

It wasn't until the mid-to-late '90s that an awakening took place among men and women in the workplace. That awakening helped workplace leaders understand the spiritual nature of their work and calling. They realized they were no longer second-class spiritual citizens, but their work was a calling by God. They were no longer around just to write the check for church ministry projects, but their work itself was to be seen as ministry unto the Lord.

It only takes 3-5 percent to change culture

For years, the church thought if we just had more Christians in the culture, we would change culture. That simply is not true. We conducted crusades, prayer vigils and unity gatherings. These are all important activities, but they don't change culture. Some say Nigeria has a large percentage of Christians, yet it is one of the most corrupt nations on earth. Most of that corruption is in higher places of influence.

We have discovered that it only takes 3-5 percent of a leadership operating at the top of a cultural mountain to actually shift that mountain. The best-case study of this fact was what the gay rights movement did using the seven cultural mountains as their strategy.

In 1987, 175 gay activists met in Virginia for a strategy weekend. They were led by two Harvard lawyers. Their goal was to change the mindset of America about the gay lifestyle. What came from this was a book entitled, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the '90s* (New York: Plume, 1990). They even admitted in this book that no one is born gay, but that homosexuality is a product of sociological factors in the life of that person.

They realized that having kinky in-your-face parades did not endear them to the public. They took a new approach. Here is

what they did.

## **Arts & Entertainment**

They encouraged their people to get acting roles in Hollywood with gay characters represented in movies and sitcoms. They would be portrayed as normal people, like everyone else.

## **Media**

They would plant stories in media and have gays get key positions in media, like Don Lemmon and Anderson Cooper on CNN. Don Lemmon even shared about his gay lifestyle on national TV, saying he knows he was born gay.

## **Government**

They began a campaign that promoted their cause as a civil issue versus a moral issue. They even tried to hijack the civil rights movement by comparing their cause to black discrimination, which angered civil rights leaders.

## **Family**

They changed the definition of marriage to include gay couples. This is one of the more serious things our nation has done that has grave consequences. We legalized gay marriage.

## **Business**

They got businesses all over America to add gay couples to their insurance programs and protect their rights in the workplace. More liberal businesses took up their cause and promoted new gay-sensitive policies.

## **Church**

Many churches have endorsed gays in leadership and have caused splits in denominations over this issue. Churches are being threatened by governments they will lose their tax status if they follow what the Bible says about the gay lifestyle.

In less than 25 years, the gay movement has changed their issue from being a moral issue to being a civil issue—all through a strategy of the seven cultural mountains.

So, what does all this have to do with evangelical church leaders? A lot.

The Bible says, “He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

There is no other institution in America that convenes more seven cultural mountain-leaders weekly than the local church. Yet, pastors rarely give sermons or provide training programs inside their churches to equip them to see their work lives as a ministry and calling.

Workplace leaders are more often seen as the checkbook for ministry projects instead of viewing them as having their own calling to be salt and light in the culture for Jesus Christ through their work/life call. Or, they are asked to volunteer for activities in the local church where they do not use their work life-skills that can make such a difference in our culture.

There are hundreds of workplace ministries in existence today serving over 40 million Christians in the workplace. When these organizations offer to serve the local church to better equip leaders in their church, they are given the cold shoulder. They don’t see the importance of changing the way they are teaching their members.

The result? A weak church and a culture that is being lost to those who better understand how to impact the culture, like the gay rights movement or George Soros, who is discipling the nation through starting and funding hundreds of groups for liberal causes.

If we are going to impact the culture for Jesus Christ, the church must change the way it equips those who sit in their pews every week.

If you are a church leader reading this, when is the last time you preached a sermon on “your work is a ministry and calling”?

Do you have an ongoing training program designed to help every member see their work as a calling and a ministry?

Do you allow workplace leaders to share what God did through them through a video or testimony on Sunday mornings?

Is this message of “your work is your ministry” part of the DNA of your local church?

If you are in leadership for church denominational conferences, when is the last time you had someone speak about the importance of the entire church focus on equipping leaders in the 7 mountains for cultural influence?

If you are not doing these things, then you are part of the problem that we are losing our culture.

How do you measure success?

Let me ask you a question. How do you measure success? Is it the number of church programs? The size of your budget? The number of salvations? Jesus measured success by one criteria. It's revealed in the Lord's prayer. “Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” His criteria related to culture. How much of heaven is revealed in your community and culture?

Many church leaders are under great pressure to serve a multitude of special interests in the local church. I understand this. Being a pastor can be a thankless job with members who nitpick about everything they see the pastor is

not doing right. I hope this letter does not fall into that category. I hope this letter is more encouragement to church leaders of the important role and opportunity they have to make a big difference in the culture.

I have worked in this area for over 25 years. I have tried to help pastors see the problem. Those who began to shift their focus on equipping leaders in their church saw a dramatic difference in the spiritual climate of their church. For the first time their leaders felt AFFIRMED in their own calling. This makes a huge difference in the spiritual climate of the local church.

I implore you as a church leader to think differently about how to equip your workplace leader. When you do, we will see positive change in our culture. Together, we can really make a difference. {eoa}

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