

7 Cultural Shifts That Should Start Within the Church

Most people agree the nations of the West are headed in the wrong direction when it comes to **morality** and culture. While it is very popular in some circles to blame presidents, Congress (or Parliament) and local elected officials, the **Word of God** makes it clear where to place the blame.

To quote evangelist **Charles Finney**:

“The error that lies at the foundation of this decay of individual and public conscience originates, no doubt, in the pulpit. ... Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree.

“If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it.

“If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it.

“Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation.”

I say amen to this! The **Bible** calls Christ followers the salt of the earth and the light of the world—not secular political leaders. (Read Matthew 5:13-16.)

Consequently, I believe we will never see a positive shift in our general culture unless we first see a radical **biblical** shift in our churches.

The following are some of the **church** culture shifts I think we need to see first in order to shift the general culture:

1. Pastors need to promote the kingdom, not build their own empires.

Unfortunately, many pastors focus merely on building their own empires instead of the kingdom of God. We—and I say “we” because I have been a pastor for almost 30 years—are often consumed with the needs and challenges of our own particular congregation to the point where we forget about our surrounding community and the larger picture of the kingdom of God. The general theme of Jesus, John the Baptist and the apostle Paul in the New Testament was the kingdom—not even the local church! (Although the local church is the main agent of the kingdom.)

2. We need to focus on “mega influence,” not megachurches.

Too often the goal of **pastors** is to have large crowds instead of making disciples. Jesus told us to make disciples, not just new converts (Matt. 28:19; Luke 14:25-27). Crowds accommodate secular culture. Only disciples can transform it!

3. We need to go from a consumer mentality to a service mentality.

Too often believers only come to church to feel good and have their needs met. This is to be expected from a new Christian, but many believers I have known for years still come to church with a mentality of what they can get instead of what they can give. Until the body of Christ changes en masse regarding this mindset, we will never be culture-shifters but merely self-focused consumers. Mature believers commit to a congregation to serve the saints and their community and not vice versa.

4. We need to focus our prosperity on spreading the gospel.

Many people are drawn to congregations that preach prosperity because they have a desire to be financially blessed. While it

is true God wants us blessed, it is also true He wants us blessed so we can be a blessing. Deuteronomy 8:18 teaches us that God has given us power to get wealth so He can confirm His covenant on the earth. We need to seek first His kingdom and be God's treasurers who steward His wealth for His purposes on the earth.

5. We need to make emotional maturity a criteria for all Christian leadership.

It is not enough that a person is gifted, anointed and able to preach before we put them in a pastoral leadership role. Too many leaders carry emotional wounds from the past that give them an unhealthy drive to be successful in order to prove themselves. The result is an ego-driven ministry not always led by the Holy Spirit regarding the mission and activities of the church. I believe we need to pay attention to the emotional maturity of a person before placing them in leadership, because the foundation of our life is not our ability but our character. Having emotionally mature leaders will attract the next generation of high-end leaders who are craving authentic, broken leaders who intimately know their God.

6. We must equip our congregations with a biblical worldview of cultural leadership.

Too often our preaching is more mystical and about escaping the earth instead of engaging it. The Bible is not a book about heaven but a book about how to steward the gifts God has given us to serve faithfully on the earth. That being said, it behooves pastors to equip the saints with a **biblical** worldview that enables disciples to think God's thoughts after Him regarding politics, economics, science, philosophy, education, family, music and the arts. If we don't start doing this en masse in the body of Christ, we will continue to lose the culture, because the saints will only know enough for personal salvation but not how to relate their faith to the secular world for the sake of kingdom's advance on the earth.

7. We must reach the next generation of high-end leaders in

our churches and communities.

Many of the churches where I preach that are culturally engaged have an average age of 50 years old and older. If this age demographic does not dramatically shift in the next 20 years, these churches will not exist! The church needs to get Holy Spirit-inspired strategies and create a church culture that celebrates creativity and attracts the next generation of capable leaders. This is a must if our nation is going have a chance of being restored to Judeo/Christian ethics in culture.

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