

Are You Counter-Cultural?

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INTRODUCTION:

- i. There was a time when this country was thought of and characterized itself as a “Christian nation”
 - Many Judeo-Christian tenets were embedded into our nation’s original identity; some remain still
 - For decades, these tenets have been systematically, purposefully ... even viscerally driven from our culture
- ii. Christians must prepare to live victoriously in a culture that grows more and more hostile to our beliefs
 - The Holy Spirit warned of such times, but we have become soft in our religious liberties – **2 Tim. 3:1-5, 12**
 - The Lord promised persecution for our beliefs, but such is foreign to us – **Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-20**
 - The ideas of battle, warfare, persecution and suffering for our faith have always been more preacher’s rhetoric to us than practical reality. It was easy for a Christian to blend into our culture. No longer.
 - We must now accept that our current culture has shifted. Christianity is not mainstream. We and our children are on the leading edge of that shifting tide. Many are already lost in the undertow.
- iii. One of the greatest challenges we face is learning to be counter-cultural! Our brethren ages ago knew how to do this, because they lived where Christian thinking was not mainstream. It was contrary to cultural norms.
 - “A counter-culture is a subculture whose values and norms of behavior differ substantially from those of mainstream society, or in opposition to mainstream cultural mores.” (Wikipedia)
 - When we think of this concept, we think of things like hippies, goths, emo, biker, etc. NOT Christianity!
- iv. Are we as counter-cultural as we need to be?

DISCUSSION:

I. OUR COUNTER-CULTURAL CALLING

- A. Jesus taught counter-culturalism in the Sermon on the Mount – **Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34a, 38-39, 43-44**
- B. We are called upon to be different than the culture around us – **2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 (note Num. 33:51-56)**
- C. The world should think us “strange” – **1 Pet. 4:1-4**
 1. When the world partakes, we abstain – **1 Pet. 2:11-12; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:22; Eph. 5:3-7**
 2. When the world abstains, we partake – **2 Cor. 1:3-7; Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 3:12-19**
- D. Christians are called to be “special” ... not common – **Tit. 2:14, 1 Pet. 2:9-10**

II. OUR COUNTER-CULTURAL STRUGGLE

- A. Christianity today (as this culture identifies it) is not significantly different than our culture
 1. We watch the same things, read the same stuff, like the same things, dress the same way, etc.
 2. Christian worship (as it is largely known) is more like our culture’s rock concert than it is first century worship (noting that we are very conservative and “traditional” in our thinking on that)
 3. The culture in our homes grows more like the culture of this world (divorce, adultery, worldliness, etc.)
 4. We have come to speak the speech of this world and not the language of the Lord – **Neh. 13:23-24**
- B. If this characterizes us, then what reason do we give those of this world to become Christians?
 1. Even the church has become lost in an effort to become increasingly culturally relevant (our identity is lost, our distinctiveness is lost, Christ’s message cannot prevail in such circumstances)
 2. We need not concern ourselves with being culturally relevant, we need to be counter-cultural
- C. Not only we are in a fight for our souls, we are in a fight for the hearts, minds and souls of our children
 1. This world is looking to make our children tolerant, accepting and pliable to its ways. We fight this with rules and such to prevent these things, yet give them little of what they need to resist this world.
 2. We tell them what to do, but do not do enough to show them what to do and why we are doing it.
 3. In the crossfire, many of our children have become counter-Christian, as well as counter-cultural
 4. Unless we make some radical adjustments and teach and show our children why and how, showing them the grace and love of our Lord while instilling deep within His precepts, we will lose more of them to the ways of this world.

CONCLUSION:

- i. In many ways, it is my conviction that the church is at its best when it is counter the culture of the day
 - To be a Christian requires us to be radically different (no room for the lukewarm)
 - The idea of sacrificing for Christ involves so much more than merely laying some money in a plate
 - The reality of persecution requires genuine commitment to Christ, as the weak will waver time and again
- ii. It is hard to be a light to those lost in darkness when there is no contrast in brightness – **Matt. 5:14-16**
 - The darker this world gets, the brighter we will shine
 - The more sinful this culture gets, the more counter-cultural we must be
- iii. The goal is not being counter-cultural for the sake of being contrary, to draw attention to ourselves or to show ourselves more righteous or better than anyone else. The purpose is to glorify, honor and please God with our lives. When we do this, we will naturally be counter-cultural.