



WHY CONTEMPORARY REVIVALS HAVE NOT BROUGHT CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

**CCC Kingdom Leadership Webinar
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Introduction

- There is a seismic shift taking place today in the marketplace and the church. We need to understand how to respond if we are going to bring systemic transformation.
- This presentation deals with how the church should apply the gospel in response to cultural shifts.

Mistakes

- It is a mistake to believe that the culture will shift because of a church revival or a societal awakening.
- It is a mistake to think that political victories will bring transformation.

Influencing Society

- Politics is only one expression of societal power.
- We must influence the other mind-molding sectors of society if we are going to dictate the direction of culture.
- We need to influence the Ivy League universities.
- We need to influence major news outlets.

The Church's Role

- We need to train the *ekklesia* to take the lead, not only in church but in society.
- We need revivals and multigenerational strategies to place our leading thinkers and practitioners in the highest levels of culture.
- We need to nurture and/or convert those who are part of the emerging “creative class”.

Characteristics of this new creative class-driven economy

- Businesses are moving towards creative urban centers.
- Typical hierarchical structures are fading.
- Top-down autocratic leadership is no longer effective.
- Loyalty to one community and one company for life is a thing of the past.
- Diversity is in; conservative values are respected but not the norm.

How should the church respond?

- The church should build authentic communities to model the city of God before we attempt to transform the city of man.
- World-changers need to experience creativity, leadership, covenant, unity, purpose and kingdom power in the church community (*ekklesia*).
- Start investing towards educating and cultivating the most creative people in our churches.
- Prayer, fasting and revival among masses of people will not shift the culture.

God Uses Those Already in High Places

- God has used people that were already in high places of authority and/or culture before a nation was transformed:
 - Moses
 - Daniel
 - Nehemiah
 - Samuel
 - David
 - All the great prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Ahijah, Amos, etc.)

God Uses Those Already in High Places

- Even church history reiterates this:
 - The conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine
 - St. Augustine
 - Christian Emperor Charlemagne
 - Martin Luther and John Calvin
 - John Wesley and George Whitefield
 - Jonathan Edwards
 - The Clapham Sect which included William Wilberforce
 - Charles Finney

God Uses Those Already in High Places

The Azusa Street Revival and other 20th century revivals did not have significant cultural impact because they primarily converted masses of people without touching the cultural elite and top decision makers of society.

How to Relate to Those in High Places

- We must understand the delicate balance when infiltrating and engaging the cultural elites of society.
- The Beatitudes of Matthew 5-7 teach us how to interface with others in our communities.
- The church needs to learn how to avoid the extremes of the Christian Right, Christian Left, and the pietists who avoid cultural engagement altogether.

The Christian Right

- The Christian Right thinks the answer is only political.
- This approach clothes the gospel of Christ with a particular political party and pits us against people in the world who we are trying to save.
- The result: The church trying to exert power and control people through legal means and changing laws.

The Christian Right

- This approach, by itself, is a very weak line of defense because of the vicissitudes of democratic elections.
- This approach also smacks of Constantinianism.
 - Result: The church was weakened from within because unconverted pagans joined the Christian community without abandoning their lifestyles and core beliefs.

The Christian Left

- The Christian Left only accommodates the gospel to the prevailing culture.
- Results: Losing the biblical distinctions of salt and light.
- A church that recognizes same-sex marriage and values the environment more than the Ten Commandments has already lost its soul.

The Pietists

The pietists or Anabaptists take the approach that the church should only build alternative sub-cultures that don't engage or affirm the prevailing culture.

The Kingdom Alternative

- The kingdom alternative is to take the approach of the Celtic Church in the 6th to 8th centuries.
- They built an alternative community that was a model for the pagan communities they lived among.

The Kingdom Alternative

- They also recognized God's favor upon His created order which many theologians refer to as common grace.
- Their communities of faith embraced the non-believing communities, loved them, and won them to Christ by demonstrating the gospel in everyday life.

The Kingdom Alternative

- The church is called to build what James Davison Hunter, in his book *To Change the World*, describes as communities of faith.
- Affirm the good in our surrounding societal structures.
- Demonstrate the antithesis against that which is sinful and corrupt, not necessarily only in word but how we live our lives as Christ followers.

The Kingdom Alternative

- The church must also maintain a balance between honoring the traditions of the church and relating to contemporary culture.
- The church is called to model the power and blessing of the traditional nuclear family and marriage.
- This is necessary if we are going to be the antithesis to the fragmentation and curse of the alternate family structures of the present pagan world system.

Summary

- If we are going to transform culture we need to engage and shift the influencers toward biblical values at the highest levels in every major sphere of society.
- We cannot only reach masses of people and change political elections.
- If we don't reach the 3-5% who are the decision makers, then we will never reach our goals of societal transformation.

Summary

- Jeremiah 29:4-7: The most important thing we are called to do is to live exemplary lives that are good witnesses to our surrounding communities.
- We need to embrace, serve and love our cities and communities, while at the same time train our children and those with the greatest potential in our churches to take the lead at the gates of every sphere of society.

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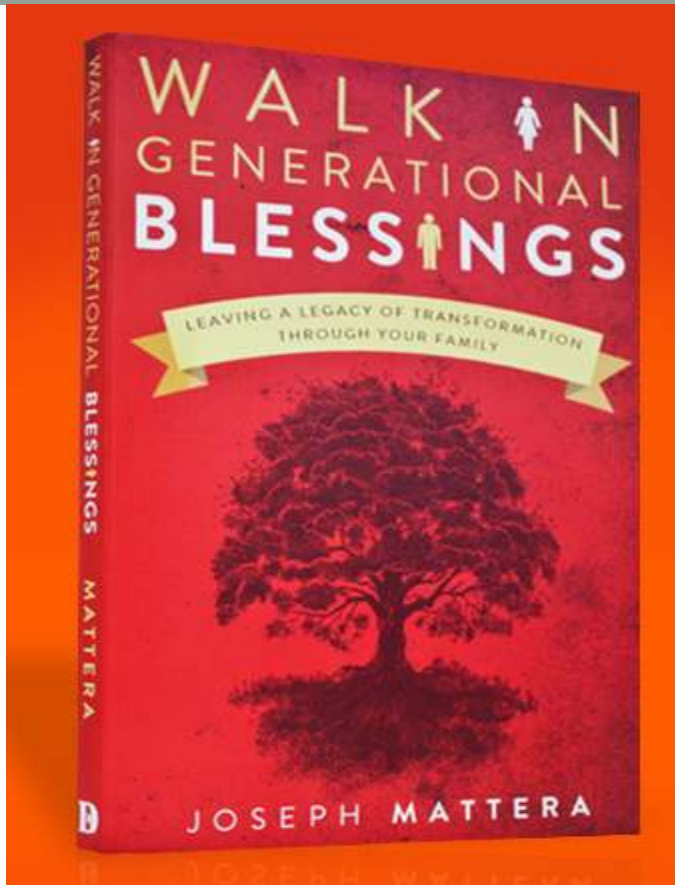
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