

Cultural Christianity-Part 2

I. The Third Century Church Absorbing The Pagan Culture

2 Corinthians 6:16-17 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

"From its foundations the Church had gradually absorbed the best of life, the organizations, the institutions, the laws, the learning, and whatever else of good worth there was in the Roman empire. What the Church thus took to herself she transformed and sanctified, so though Roman in its source, it was Christian in its form, influence and tendencies. To the treasures of ancient civilization the Church joined the great and luminous truths of God's revelation."

(The History of The Church, B.J. Spalding, p.379)

"In the reign of Theodosius the Great (379-395) Christianity was designated as the state religion."

(Great Ages of Men, Byzantium, Philip Sherrard, pp.55-56)

"In the late third century came the first deliberate attempts by Christian missionaries to 'baptize' features of pagan religions, and thus overcome them by absorbing them into Christianity."

(The History of Christianity, Fortress Press, p. 81)

1 Kings 12:26-33 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah." 28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. 32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

II. The Church In 1906 Absorbing Culture

"There are two different interpretations of the church which inevitably came into conflict. There were those who believed the church should move on with the world and adapt the spirit of the New Testament to conditions that were ever changing. They held that when not forbidden by New Testament, they were free to adapt their program to changing needs. On the other hand, there were those who believed the pattern of the church was fixed for all time, and the fact that certain things were not sanctioned was sufficient ground for rejecting them."

(The Disciples In Kentucky, A. W. Fortunes, pp. 364-365)

Revelation 22:18-19 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

2 Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

"The Christian Church emphasizes society and the physical man by appealing to the carnal nature, with church carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, church kitchens, church camps, and elaborate fellowship halls; the church of Christ does not. (1 Cor. 10:7; Rom.14:17; 1 Cor.11:22, 34)"

(Why I Left the Christian Church, Floyd A. Decker, 1944)

III. The Church Absorbing Culture In Our Generation

"Our churches are filled with adults whose parents "back home" do not understand the changes sweeping through the church. One generation negotiates the process of change with another. Such negotiation is not always easy or painless."

(The Crisis of Change, Larry James, p. 5, Image Magazine, Vol. 6-No. 2)

"Some of the ways we have been content to look at Scripture just don't work in our current world."

(The New Hermeneutic, Denny Boultinghous, p.29, Image, Vol.6, no.2)

Absorbing The Morality Of Our Culture

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Matthew 19:9-10 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."
10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

Absorbing The Feminist Movement Of Our Culture

"We are struggling to define the role of women in our churches in view of contemporary culture just as the early church did in its culture"
(*The Crisis Of Change*, ibid)

"The absence of women in visible positions of leadership in congregational life in Churches of Christ seems hopelessly restrictive and antiquated. It is out of step with the whole drift of the times and we can reasonably expect that certain attempts will be made to correct the situations."
(Allan J. McNicol, *Feminism Paul And The Church*, Wineskins, vol. 2, #1, p. 15)

1 Corinthians 14:34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

1 Timothy 2:12-14 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

Absorbing The Entertainment Of Our Culture

Matthew 21:12-13 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Back To School Party

"The Summer is winding down, and it's time to celebrate! Come out and have fun with us, the day will include inflatables, water slides, carnival games, family games, prizes, food and more! Don't miss out on the fun!"

Cardinal Drive Church of Christ