

Functional Stewardship, the Future Church, and Your Christian Direction?

In an hour when there is a Seismic Shift occurring in culture, when a Schism is now being revealed in the Evangelical and Catholic churches - what spiritual connection choices will you make for yourself and your family? (Please forward, other relevant articles at bigskyworldview.org under resources/library.)

This article will be a hard-hitting analysis of some of the inaction of much of the evangelical church in the last decades. This critique is not offered to change the minds of those leaders. The analysis is offered as reasons why Christ-followers should use this moment to **wisely consider their stewardship** – where they are going to invest their time, money, and their children in the future. The days ahead will not be easy, but we have the opportunity to be that church that the gates of Hell will not prevail against.

It is not sensationalism to ask the question: are we on a *path similar to the one Germany was on in the 1930's*? Eric Metaxas's book *Bonhoeffer* exposes how a society can be deceived by so-called Progressives. In America today, there are many loud voices who hold the same basic socialist worldviews that were popular then. Many of them are now inside the church. By the beginning of WWII, some realized their error, but lacked the courage to resist. Metaxas outlines how the vast majority of the church in Germany caved into this socialism and many even supported Hitler. With few exceptions, the voice of the church was complicit. To now dismiss this question in this hour is irresponsibility on a scale unequalled in our time.

Christianity was the source of Western Civilization. It developed because of sound leadership that was creative in promoting Biblical worldview ideas and practices into cultures. Western Civilization and Christianity have been under attack for generations while most voices have been – like in Germany – silent.

For America to flourish culturally in the future, it will require a return to leadership that is committed to equipping a church to take responsibility for the culture with biblical principles. If a leader demonstrates lack of discernment about evil and/or unwillingness to expose it, why would you follow that Shepherd?

Like other groups that advocate for a Christian Worldview, our guiding scripture is I Chronicles 12:32 which points to the tribe of Issachar who **“understood the**

times and knew what Israel should do.” It is our goal to make a Christian worldview the driving force in our actions and I believe that motive must also drive the true church. The depth of leadership suggested in this scripture is so needed today, but is so rare. In this article I want to challenge us to think about two basic things:

- **Do WE understand the times** – what is the discernment level in the church in this hour? Is the majority of the church ignoring the signs of the times and playing ostrich as it did in Germany?
- **Do WE know what to do?** Do we have a game plan for the church to become effective salt and light which impacts the direction of America by speaking truth? As much of the current evangelical church exhibits willful ignorance, refusing to engage the issues of the day, what alternatives should we be considering for the future of Christ’s Church – the real church? **What leadership will you provide in your sphere of influence?**

Below, I outline nine points where the church has failed to be the equipping center in America. But, I don’t even touch the basic doctrinal issues.

From my perspective, an individual fellowship is **either an equipping center or a center for deception – there is no middle ground**. Barna and others tell us that the vast majority of evangelicals do not have a Christian worldview. For example, they are in fact universalists – they don’t believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation, there are many ways. They don’t believe in biblical inspiration and on and on.

A true equipping center is dealing with these basic issues as well as so-called cultural issues like same-sex marriage or abortion. They are TEACHING on these issues. Those who are not dealing with these issues are centers for promoting deception. By default – if only by their silence – they are teaching. Bonhoeffer said not to speak is to speak. Our youth believe in same-sex marriage because that is what the culture teaches them. At the same time, if they attend a center for deception, they hear no other point of view.

I know that my definitions of equipping centers and centers for deception are not Politically Correct - they are rather confrontive. But in this hour, it is time to asks these hard questions

It is my *conviction* that Donald J. Trump – with all his warts – was given to America by God, as a leader who would stand for our values. All the other Presidents in my lifetime – combined – have not done what he did for the church. It is my *observation* that – for the last four years – most Christians (leaders in particular) did nothing to support this opportunity – many seeming to be more interested in mounting their self-righteous band wagons than seeing what was really happening *in the spirit world*. Remember, King David was guilty of some pretty nasty things (no comparisons intended), but God used him mightily.

What would have been the outcome of this presidential election if the majority of the evangelical church was *god-fearing* instead of *man-fearing*? We will never know!

- Was this time period a *last chance test* that we failed after the murder of 60M babies and not a peep from the church?
- Is American Christianity now about to receive the judgment it deserves?
- Who is responsible for this debacle?
- But ultimately, we want to consider...**What will we do now in our sphere of influence?**

Our institutions – the media, education, government, etc. - have gone far Left – they are atheistic. Marxist John Dewey told us what he would do with the school systems and these atheists have been successful in radicalizing our schools and evangelizing our kids. Our major corporations are now mostly globalists with sympathies for everything far Left from the LGBT movements to Black Lives Matter.

Trump rightly and fairly labeled the media *Fake-News*. So how should we rightly and fairly label most of what we call the evangelical church today? The Fake-News Media refuses to REPORT the truth. What label should we give to the churches that refuse to SPEAK the truth? By their silence, they are "calling evil good." (Isa. 5:20)

When the one institution in a society that is charged with being the salt and light shuts OFF the switch, it matters. "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint." (Prov. 29:18)

Any time you dare to challenge any group about reforming, you know you're going to pay a price. I expect many will unsubscribe even without serious consideration of my points here. Nevertheless, **I am deeply convinced that we are seeing the unfolding of a split in the evangelical church today in terms of their directions, what they will stand for, and what they will cave into in terms of reality.** There has been a steady stream of prominent leaders who have shifted their opinions on social issues. Almost weekly, we hear about another prominent church that is now "Gay-Affirming" and/or affirming of same-sex marriage. How long will it be before marrying homosexuals will be mandatory? What course will these churches take?

In some ways, this split is more visible in the Catholic Church. [Conservative Catholics](#) are speaking out even against [a Marxist Pope](#). Below we will briefly refer to Critical Theory and how it alone will so challenge the church as to separate the men from the boys

I don't pretend to know how this separation will unfold. I do know that scripture describes the way as narrow, not broad. Martin Luther and other reformers spoke of a "Visible Church" and the "Real Church" – those who really have been converted. In the centuries since these leaders spoke boldly about the need for reformation, the truth about what is real and what is not has not changed. Significant percentages of people in our churches have not really been converted – experienced regeneration. And, I believe many of the pastors know it but remain silent. Part of the reason is that there is seldom a clear explanation of the process of conversion – it's just simply too negative to talk about our rebellion, sin, repentance – all that ugly stuff. Their commitment to speaking truth is questionable on many important fronts.

How have we come to the point where we dare not speak of controversial cultural things because a large percentage of the congregation will not tolerate it?

Have we misunderstood how to be seeker-friendly and equipping at the same time? As I outline nine areas that the majority of the church has refused to address, think about what could have been if they had? But more importantly, think about what could be accomplished going forward **if we invest differently.**

As we look briefly at these missed opportunities, **my purpose is to encourage a discussion within your sphere of influence about what YOU'RE going to do.**

Young people are very influenced by what they are listening to on a regular basis. So are most of us adults. For many of us, what we hear every Sunday will shape our thinking.

A Look at Church History in America Relative to Cultural Influence:

I am going to outline just nine of the places where the church failed to speak about very critical, cultural-shaping issues. **A little clarity:** by speak I mean *teach from the pulpit on Sunday morning using history, logic, scripture, and reason - a complete teaching to inform and persuade about the given subject.* With a few of these issues, it would take a series of teachings. Those who are just fine with abortion – for example – can hold their breath as a leader states opposition to it in a brief moment. It is quite another thing for them to encounter gracious, truth-filled teaching. Then they have to choose what path they will follow.

#1. Evolution vs. Creation- The Charles Darwin Crowd's Plan:

It is difficult to pick a time when this cultural war began so I will start arbitrarily in the 1920's. The [Scopes Trial](#) is an interesting point because it was then that the teaching of evolution as truth and science exploded into the public eye. It is my conviction that every other worldview collapses without their crutch of Evolution. Evolution is to the Materialistic worldviews like Marxism what the resurrection is to Christianity. Take it away, and the entire worldview collapses.

This cornerstone doctrine of the atheists, the church has relegated to Sunday school or worse. With exceptions, the church has been silent on creation and intelligent design. This issue has been one of the **biggest weapons atheists** have used to deconstruct the faith of our youth. While large percentages of our youth are walking away from the church, we have heard only silence about this issue from the pulpits.

#2. The Sexual Revolution of the 60's and Beyond – What Marxism Wanted:

[In this article](#), you see reference to “the Long March Through the Institutions” and the 60's. This march was a reference to Marxist groups taking our institutions. David Horowitz article sowing to the sixties outlines what was really happening while the church was sleeping

Any perceptive Christian realizes that the perversion of this movement is like the “Energizer Bunny”; it just keeps living on. From the [45 Goals of the Communist Party](#) we know that destroying our moral base was fundamental to Marxists taking America. Most of the church did not lift its voice in opposition to this revolution. [Radical Feminism](#) and its traveling companion Marxism joined forces to begin the destruction of the nuclear family. LGBT activism also came alive during this period along with the push to promote pornography.

Pornography was used by [Marxism](#) (see # 26 and 40) and [2nd Wave Feminism](#) to destroy our moral base as they told us it would. If you listen to Josh McDowell, he will tell you that pornography is decimating the church. With over 60% of the pastorate addicted, there is little moral energy available to push back on this ongoing scourge.

Where was the outcry of teaching from the church about the sexual revolution? This should have been a recurring theme but it **was largely non-existent**.

#3. The Civil Rights Movement – missed opportunity to support real social justice:

While I am no authority on this movement, I know enough to tell you that here the Marxist agenda beat us to the punch. Many real Christians were involved, most of the church was silent. One of the results was that Marxists got their foot in the door promoting social justice. Now, a large percentage of the Black churches are not Christian at all, they – like the majority of the main-line denomination churches - subscribe to [Liberation Theology](#) or [Black Liberation Theology](#) which is in reality Marxism.

Our failure in social justice combined with LBJ’s Great Society welfare movement turned the Black community from Republican to Democrat – ideas that [keep Black people down](#).

#4. Abortion - 1973 Roe vs. Wade – the battle about who is human:

While Francis Schaffer and a few others were yelling at the top of their lungs (See *What Ever Happened to Human Race?*) about this travesty, the [Evangelical Church was silent](#). Early on, the Southern Baptists supported it. This scourge has a bloody, evil history that goes way back in America. **Only ignorance and cowardice** can explain how over 60 million babies have been murdered in

America and – for the most part – not a peep from the church. **My evidence?** Nancy and I have been a part of 17 different churches in 6 states in the last 47 years. Not once, have I ever heard a teaching from the pulpit on this issue or – for that matter – on any other issue in this section of the article. Little wonder that – if I had to venture a guess – at least a third of the people in our evangelical churches are just fine with abortion. The people bare ultimate responsibility for this, but the [silent shepherds](#) should hear the cries of those babies in their sleep at night. Further, I have challenged dozens of leaders to send me a recording or a LINK to a recording where they taught on abortion – from the pulpit. The result? A goose egg!

#5. The Rise of the LGBT Movement – Homosexuality, Gender Identity, Transgenderism and Other Cultural Travesties:

It is difficult to put a date to this movement, it goes way back. Few issues have caused more confusion and even division in the conservative church. The issues are complex for sure and the need for clear teaching from leadership was critical. But what did we get? Nothing! We have seen our youth embrace these issues because of what they hear in school and from culture regarding fairness – social justice.

[What does the Bible](#) really teach about homosexuality? Again, you rarely hear clear teaching on this from the church. The silence from the pulpit has caused a fog of confusion in the pew. Once these views get ingrained in the culture – mostly from emotion – they are hard to root out.

Transgenderism is a HOT issue being used by the LEFT to indoctrinate even children in the early grades. In our high schools, this is being used as an [evangelistic tool to steal](#) our daughters. What is [the worldview](#) behind this evil? Again, there is massive confusion and this is the LEFT'S primary weapon at the moment. It is [devastating to children](#). Teaching clarity on this would not be difficult, but – again – we hear only silence.

Tell me, what factor or factors have kept most leaders from addressing these issues? Ignorance, apathy, fear – or all of the above?

#6. Same-Sex Marriage – Obergefell vs. Hodges; 2017:

Why has the public accepted same-sex marriage? They have accepted it because of the old principle that ***Policy Promotes Practice***. Whatever the law becomes, the public blindly assumes to be right or good. With no church voice in the culture, acceptance has been the result.

[One-man one-woman marriage](#) is the [most important cornerstone](#) of our culture. It is the best [weapon against poverty](#) and many other cultural evils.

Do you know that there are informed Christians who think this (and the other issues I mention here) are political issue? The institution of marriage is central to the existence of the family and the family is the cornerstone of healthy societies. Marxists and their working ally the Feminists despise the nuclear family and they have said so. Destroying it is a central goal of Marxist-Communists as you will see again in the [45 Goals of the Communist Party](#). (See # 40, 41)

A simple question for you: leading up to this Supreme Court decision, did you hear a three-part teaching from the pulpit on “the Institution of Marriage?” It would take at least three sessions to teach this well and hundreds of hours of study for most teachers.

But no, again, we heard silence from most of the Shepherds.

#7. The Election – Politics or Worldview?

The *blind eye* most leaders turned toward this election **can only be labeled as willful ignorance**. The Democratic Party is now not a party, but a Marxist-Atheist religion. They are the prime enemy of Christianity. How could you possibly be silent in this hour about the worldview differences between these two political strongholds? Here are some thoughts relative to how this was handled in the church.

Can you be a Christian and a Marxist at the same time? This article From the Federalist suggests [the answer is a resounding NO!](#) Can a person embrace orthodox Christianity and the Marxist Platform of the Democratic party at the same time? Pastor Gary Hamrick of Cornerstone Chapel, Leesburg, VA., walked his people through a [comparison of the Democratic and Republican platforms](#). When he was done, one could only conclude that the answer to the above question was a resounding NO. Orthodox Christianity and the Democratic Platform are opposites. But any informed leader should have known that. In the

recent video [A Socialist Agenda](#), Curtis Bowers author of *Agenda, Grinding America Down* warns that we are on the edge of losing America. Was pictorial silence sheer ignorance or a desire not to offend?

How do you explain the predominance of silence during this election from the pulpit? They certainly do not demonstrate the character of their early brothers, the [Black Robe Regiment](#). These Pastors taught America why the revolution was godly and then lead their congregations into the battle. Their actions were driven by a deep understanding from the scriptures of the covenant between Kings and the people - to obey God and not their own agendas.

Alas, most of our spiritual leaders today are exposed because this election was ALL about worldviews.

I have [documented elsewhere](#) that the Democratic Party is no longer a political party, (see. P.4-7) it is a [Marxist-Atheist movement](#). If you walk through my article you will see the ties of their candidates – Obama, Clinton and others - to Marxism. You will also see a history of radical racism that from the beginning, opposed the Civil Rights movement and realize that no Democrat has the historical virtue to lecture anyone on Social Justice. Marxism’s primary goal has been to destroy authentic orthodox Christianity. Again, as Marxists, the Democratic Party is the enemy of Christianity. **To pretend that the church had no interest in this election was incomprehensible and irresponsible.**

Instead, what did we hear from many leaders? Just love your neighbor, love will fix all this, don’t judge each other – etc. While this attitude is appropriate it alone is a complete abdication of responsibility to be the ones who “*understand the times and know what to do.*” If ever the church needed to see leadership with a clear voice for truth, it was 2020! The church refused to be guided by worldview thinking and the results will be devastating for years to com.

#8. The COVID Crisis – Tool of Manipulation?

There is no one saying that this COVID health issue is not real and neither am I.

In the Dec. 20th issue of the New American, Dr. John Eidsmoe outlines how the [LEFT used this crisis to transform](#) culture (p.17). I am saying that people who really know what is going on realize that it is being used to completely transform America. The evidence is everywhere; only willful ignorance will deny this. **In the**

midst of this chaos and confusion – if ever there was a need for DISCERNING leadership that “understands the times and knew what to do” it has been in 2020.

Books have been written about this and this article will not be another one. There were a few pastors speaking up on what was going on. They were warning their people and encouraging them not to be deceived. Was your church one of these?

The Left told us they would use this crisis to transform America. Coupled with their election efforts, they are well on their way.

#9. Critical Theory (CT) – Marxist Weapon Transforming America:

CT has invaded every segment of our society as you will see in the [Heritage Backgrounder](#) *Critical Race Theory, the New Intolerance, and Its Grip on America*. For the sake of your kids, **please read it**. And if you need more, see Dr. John Eidsmoe’s article [A Critical Analysis of Critical Race Theory](#) in the New American magazine, it is excellent! You can also see Dr. Glenn Sunshine’s podcast on our [web site under MEDIA](#). Will CT win because of our invincible attitude and laziness to understand this threat?

If the full force of the church was focused on stamping out this anti-Christian philosophy, it would take everything we could muster together to defeat it. It has invaded every institution – education, government, corporations, and the church. If you read, you will be SHOCKED at how it has penetrated.

Our worldview forum speaker for January, Alan Schlemmon from Stand To Reason asks the question *“[how is it that we have been caught off guard by Critical Theory, this false philosophy that is sweeping society and so many believers are embracing and parroting back to the church.?](#)”*

Critical Theory and its offspring *Critical Race Theory* are sweeping America like a plague. CT finds its roots deeply embedded in Marxist theory. There has even been a move to get the [Southern Baptists](#) to embrace this deception. Thankfully, some are pushing back.

To answer Alan’s question, the answer is laziness and cowardice. We have failed to do our homework, and we lack the backbone to resist this tsunami that is

costing people their jobs. Why? Because as you will see, dissent is not allowed by this bullying group.

We are hearing of youth leaders who have advocated for Black Lives Matter on Facebook. Desplicable – this fires my blood! [BLM](#) is part of the CRT issue and it is [evil beyond measure](#). Rest assured, that any leader advocating for BLM is also deeply into other Marxist issues, especially CT. Is this happening in your church – do you even know?

The Bottom Line: The Future Church - Knowing What “Israel” Should Do:

If you are committed to being a part of a fellowship that *equips the saints for the work of the ministry* (Eph. 4:12) then you may need to examine the current direction of the fellowship you are attending. The nine issues above are offered as measuring sticks to evaluate past decisions and consider future direction.

Again, their purpose is not to persuade pastors, but to challenge us about investing wisely going forward.

Below are some thoughts I hope will be useful in case you’re willing to consider a change:

- **There are churches in every community** that have set a course to follow orthodoxy and a Christian worldview. They may need to respond better to the kind of issues discussed above, but they are committed to speaking truth at all costs. **I also believe that most discerning believers know in their spiritual-gut if the fellowship they are attending falls into this category.** Will we make hard decisions about how and where we are going to invest our resources?
- Leaders that I respect believe that the **House Church** - common in the early church and in countries suffering persecution – is another consideration. These fellowships could easily connect with each other. The resources we have available today could mean much better teaching opportunities for those desiring such. I talked to a guy who is involved in his church but admitted that most of his fellowship and learning is coming through connections with a homeschool co-op. He is an example of what millions are experiencing – the depth of teaching they are experiencing is not coming from their present church experience.

- **Discipleship training** is already being conducted more fruitfully by key leaders than in most churches. The CEO leadership styles so common today do not lend themselves to meaningful shepherding and discipleship. Much of what is happening in these fellowships actually amounts more to amusement than equipping. Most of the teaching in these churches is what Glenn Stanton from Focus on the Family calls “*self-help dressed up with Bible verses.*” I remember hearing a prominent teacher who was committed to discipleship tell a pastor of a mega church that he could not disciple 15,000 people without a well-developed system of working Elders. That was in 1976 and it is still true today.
- **Synagogue Style - Socratic Learning.** The Jewish synagogue had a much different format. First, these groups usually topped out at about 100 people. The learning style was usually Socratic. Someone would read a scripture or introduce a subject and then the group would discuss it. In the Socratic styles I have seen, all were given a reading assignment ahead of time, maybe a couple of articles on a subject. Then a leader would facilitate and direct the discussion. If you had not read the material, you were asked not to contribute. This style encourages critical thinking and a higher probability of learning.
- **Adult Focus:** One of the blights on the American church is adolescence and our youth groups tend to perpetuate this. When youth are focused on seeing themselves as adults at age 15, there can come a shift in attitude about learning and responsibility

Creating A Learning-Centered Fellowship:

In his 1997 classic, *Love Your God With All Your Mind*, Dr. J.P. Moreland talks about recapturing the intellectual life in the church. (Ch. 10) Moreland taught at Biola and is one of the prominent apologists of our day, hardly some nobody who has not observed the church close up. He, like many others, is concerned with the shallow, anti-intellectual institution most of the evangelical churches have become. From Bible knowledge to history and apologetics, we score poorly. He makes some suggestions about what an alternative church might look like. After years of ministry in and around the church, Moreland states:

“I have become convinced that we evangelicals neither value nor have a strategy for developing every member of our congregation to one degree or another as Christian thinkers.” (p.188)

He here confirms my BOTTOM LINE, that we are not equipping the church for the work of the ministry (Eph.4:12). Moorland continues:

*“We have moved from wanting Pastors that are the resident authorities on theology... to a model as the CEO of the church...today the ministers we want are **Christianized pop therapists** who are entertaining to listen to... the church has **become primarily a hospital** to soothe empty selves instead of a **war college** to mobilize and train an army... to occupy territory and advance the kingdom.”*

And you thought I was negative about the church – this was two decades ago!

Refurbishing the Local Church – Thoughts from Morland:

- **No senior pastor** – ministry is based upon a plurality of elders. (Acts 14:23, 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Heb. 13:17) The local church should be led and taught by a plurality of voices. Teaching would be done by several different teachers so that the people are not shaped by one person’s thinking. One model would allow several weeks for one man to teach on economics and the next man might teach on important aspects of church history, the next several weeks on key areas of theology or doctrine. This allows adequate preparation time. Again, the focus is on training-equipping. All of these teachers would *not* have to be members of staff or even the church.
- **Notice the lack of emphasis on self-help.**
- Detailed outlines can be handed out and reading assignments can be given before each teaching series.
- I would anticipate that if you started this model at an existing church, you could well see the congregation size decrease in the short run. People who have not been used to teaching often do not respond well to this model. LET THEM GO! However, in the long run, serious minded believers would appreciate this opportunity and the group would be likely to grow.
- The Pastoral staff then should equip the people to do ministry focusing on developing the people’s giftedness. The CEO model tends to centralize ministry around the church building. This model does not.

- The purpose is not a “filling station” – coming back each week to get filled up, pleased and entertained.

Conclusions:

The purpose of this article is to foster discussion about stewardship. I have outlined nine cultural failures of church leadership over the last century. However, my goal is not to change those leaders. My purpose is to challenge us to stop doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. My purpose is to say that Christ will have His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it because it will be comprised of well-equipped warriors. **Will we – will you - be a part of developing that church in an orthodox, biblical manner that brings honor to Him?**