

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE CREATES ATMOSPHERE

27 May 2012, Stephen Smith

When the cup is full, when the culture is ready, when the climate is right, the power shifts!

What is the role of the Church with regards to influencing?

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its savour, with what shall it be salted? It is no longer good for anything, but to be thrown out and to be trodden underfoot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the grain-measure, but on a lamp stand. And it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

The church is to be the **salt of the earth** – ‘earth’ speaks of soil, a location, a region. Salt ‘dissolves’ into food, the church must have presence in the structures.

The church is to be the **light of the world** – ‘world’ cosmos: orderly arrangement of the world system. The church needs to have a presence!

For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship].

Romans 8:20-22 (Amplified)

What is a son of God?

- Men and women that bring liberty and freedom to mankind by the power of God.
- People that disarm the wicked forces, bringing mankind out of the hold of corruption into the glory, light and freedom of God.
- People that will act as God himself through the knowledge of their godly nature.
- Sonship is the releasing of the life (Zoë) of God in people!

And the Angel of Jehovah called to Abraham out of the heavens the second time, and said, I have sworn by Myself, says Jehovah; because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies.

And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

Genesis 22:15-18

Gates therefore represent:

- Seat of decision making
- Seat of power and control
- Seat of strength
- Control point for access

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life-your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life-and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

Romans 12:1-4 (Message)

So all churches can use the same Bible (incorruptible seed), but if there is no culture where the soil is prepared and developed, you will have the same seed (Bible) with different results.

Environment or Culture

- Response to ***Spiritual influence*** creates ***Atmosphere***
- Atmosphere that is sustained creates ***Climate***
- Climate that is sustained creates ***Strongholds***
- Strongholds sustained determine ***Culture***

⁸*And Jehovah God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there He put the man whom He had formed.*

¹⁵*And Jehovah God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

Genesis 2:8, 15

Culture Shift

In other words, sometimes the fastest way to change or SHIFT, is simply to change your CULTURE.

1. Response to *Spiritual influence* creates *Atmosphere*.

The principalities and powers in the spirit world seek to influence humanity. They can't make us do anything, but they try to gain an advantage over us by getting us to respond to their spiritual influence. That response creates a certain spiritual atmosphere.

2. Atmosphere that is sustained creates *Climate*.

Just as a sustained response to a particular spiritual influence creates an atmosphere, atmosphere that is sustained creates ***climate***. A climate is stronger than an atmosphere.

3. Climate that is sustained creates *Strongholds*.

The relationship between a negative spiritual climate and the hardness of human hearts, creates a stronghold. Strongholds have to do with the way people think.

For though walking about in flesh, we do not war according to flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, pulling down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

4. Strongholds sustained determine *Culture*.

In other words, the culture we live in is determined by the mindsets that control the way we think.

Collectively as a Church, the strongholds of our mind shape the beliefs, assumptions, values, customs, ethics, and morals of our society.

All these spirits try to influence, but someone must respond. If enough people respond to a spirit, an atmosphere is created that, if sustained, grows into a climate and then a stronghold that can keep generations of people in bondage. That's when the spirit begins to take influence over entire cities.

Ten principles that our culture (house) must invest into – we must work it into our soil:

1. A Culture of People That Thinks Ahead.

The important thing is ideas. If you have great ideas, you have the greatest asset you must have. Then there is no limit in what you can accomplish with your FAMILY, business and your life. We must not be slaves of the past. We must be pioneers of the future!

2. A Culture without Weirdness.

3. A House Culture of Punctuality.

Constantly turning up late reveals a selfish person or an undisciplined or unorganised individual. If you are one minute late at a meeting where a hundred people are gathered, you have wasted one hundred minutes. What you don't use – you lose.

-
Dr. David Molopo

4. A House Culture of Participation.

Becoming a member of a church means we are joining with a group of people for the benefit of everyone involved. We want our needs to be met. We want to learn and grow, but we must also bring our gifts, strengths, talents and resources to the group for the good of all. A church relationship can never be one-sided. Commitments should be reciprocal. We should recognise our need to give and receive – participation.

-
Dr. James Richards

5. A House Culture of Acceptance and Freedom.

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

Romans 14:1-4 (Message)

6. A House Culture That Knows Order.

These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess—as long as you live in the land.

Deuteronomy 12:1

God gives us the patterns and procedures according to which we must walk and function. The kingdom of God has an order, an administration! If we don't know the order and administration of the kingdom, then we need the actions, the way we must conduct ourselves. If you know the decrees and laws, the actions will follow.

7. Increase with Integrity.

Integrity is not what we do, it is who we are. Our image is that which people think of us. Integrity is who we really are.

8. A House Culture that is Generation Orientated.

We have long-range plans but along comes the terminal generation. They focus on the study of the future and are not interested in taking the city and building strong families. As leaders, we must make it our priority to build good relationships not knowing whether or not Christ will come in our day. Then we can pass off the vision, momentum, strategy, resources, and assets to the next generation.

-
Larry Stockstill

9. A House Culture that Identify and Acknowledges Leaders.

Leaders are ordinary people who accept or are placed under extraordinary circumstances that bring forth their latent potential, producing a character that inspires the confidence and trust of others.

- Dr Miles Munroe

10. A Culture of Excellence.

Anyone can do something, but excellence requires that we will never be satisfied unless our activities are dealt with in the same way as what Christ would have done it.

The end result is a culture in which the principalities and powers of the air become the “gods” of this world, deceiving people into pursuing wealth and pleasure and any number of other things as the keys to happiness rather than pursuing the One True and Living God, in whom alone true happiness is found.

It is time for change. The time has come for a great power shift. God is ready to rise up some people who will LEARN how to pull down strongholds and, ultimately, change the culture in which they live.