

# PASTORPEDIA™

*Cutting Edge Conversations for Pastors and Church Leaders*

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Vol. 8, Issue 12

October 2021

Produced by [Momentum Ministry Partners](#)

## Cultural shock in the church

### ***“It’s in the grocery store also!”***

So much has changed, and so quickly. Most of us are startled often about how values have shifted, and what bothers people these days.

And The Shift attends church. Pretty regularly. Many do not pray like they used to, or don’t worry when we think they should, and don’t wince enough at the way everything is going. Babies are a choice, some say, and loudly; so is gender; so is loyalty.

How can anyone expect us to know what to say from the pulpit about all this? How can we keep our heads and our hearts when it seems like everyone is losing theirs? Well not everyone.

Let’s converse about all this, do a little shuttering and stuttering, but then embrace some clear strategy with determination.

And with strong reliance on God’s Spirit of truth with whom we live in combination!

*Prayerfully, carefully, and in this together!*  
*Knute, Jeff, Jim*

## ***What is it and how does it present itself?***

### ***Jeff Bogue***

- Culture shock is the feeling of disorientation that a person experiences when suddenly exposed to an unfamiliar culture, a way of life, or a set of attitudes.
- It presents/displays itself as bewilderment, anger, depression, denial, and 1000 different emotions.

### ***Jim Brown***

- When life as we know it takes a turn in a very different direction.
- When the values, morals, and beliefs we once stood for are no longer seen on the front lines.
- We are in the post-Christian world and in the last ten months culture has changed ten years!
- It presents itself in the worldview of individuals and where they stand on the essentials of humanity.

### ***Knute Larson***

- It is very anti-Bible in most cases, said someone who believes the Bible to be the inspired and truthful Word of God. The two greatest works of God, creation and salvation, are the foundation for so much of what we believe and do in the church. The culture shock newbies have dropped both of these very clearly. After that it is each his own.
- It is also very closely tied to gender and family and relationships. Family as the most basic unit as described in the Bible—even more basic than the church—has been destroyed on paper. Thoughts about it are presented on the news and in the schools in many cases. And certainly in many informal settings and family meetings.

It seems like as people gave up traditional beliefs, some of them very closely tied to Christian convictions, they grabbed at whatever came along. Even the absurd.

- Some of the demonstrations of new beliefs are brazen—the two men kissing with lust on the new show, the teenagers living as if they are married, the shallow arguments on talk shows as to when a baby is a person. If we do not clarify and promote the truth, our children or those who follow us may not know where to fetch it.
- And all of this is a generation or so after strong and determined Christians thought we could capture the culture by public opinion and careful elections.

## ***How do we help our people through it?***

### ***Jeff Bogue***

- First, we help them process what they're feeling. My experience is that they'll often fixate on a person or a group and lay blame instead of really thinking through all that's going on.
- We help them orient. We bring information and clarity about the culture around them to help them understand what's really going on, then show Christ's heart for the new culture. Jesus loves those people, and we need to love them as well.

### ***Jim Brown***

- We must be good listeners and sit with them and have them share what is bewildering them.
- We show them from the Bible where they can find hope.
- We remind them that God is not surprised by what is happening in our world and that He is sovereignly in control.
- Show them that the darker the night, the brighter the light! It is a great chance to evangelize the world.

### ***Knute Larson***

- As obviously implied by the question, we simply must. If the family and church are not stability and anchors for brains and souls, nothing will be. Not even Fox News 😊
- Our answer to this important question must relate to the New Testament, when the readers were going through culture shock of their own, very parallel to what we see today. So we must "Preach the Word," as once commanded early-church pastors. Self-help original thoughts will not do it. The strength of God is not behind that as it is with His Word.
- Listen for doubt. Sympathize with the struggle. Listen some more. But then point to the facts as revealed by God. So this implies being with the people and communicating so that they get feedback. It means sitting down with some people as they express doubts, and also having a church system where care is assigned to all the groups.
- In addition to preaching the Word, acknowledge reality. When we act as if we did not see the headlines that week and do not connect the world of the Bible to the world right around us, people think Scripture is otherworldly in the wrong sense. Some have defined excellence in preaching as *then* and *now*. Explaining what it meant *then* and how it applies *now*. Integrity is everything or at least very important. And integrity not only means honesty and morality, but it also means oneness—that the message you preach and the real life out there are one in the sense that you are facing reality and telling how we should all do life. Some preaching seems disconnected from real life and the daily battles the listeners are thinking about.

## ***How do we teach confidence in Christ in spite of it?***

### ***Jeff Bogue***

- He teaches timeless truths. Sometimes you just teach Jesus and let Him speak for himself.

- Guide them into an understanding of God’s truth and how it cuts through questions. Oftentimes what happens is every culture’s asking the same set of questions and we just have not yet understood how to bring Jesus’ truth in a way that is relevant to that culture.

***Jim Brown***

- Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever!
- We win in the end! Show them the long game where evil has a shelf life and God conquers evil in the end.
- Remind them that God has always provided a way through difficult cultural times.
- Live your life in an attractive way that reflects that you are clinging to the hope of Jesus.

***Knute Larson***

- Explain the cross of Christ very very regularly. Make it a habit. The legal transaction at the cross was the greatest attack on God—not a cultural thing, but a people thing. While it looked to some that evil had won when Jesus died, everyone who has a heart to be objective knows that three days later it was obvious that Christ had conquered.
- The whole Bible, especially the New Testament, was written to inspire confidence and the right way to live to people who were struggling in a very sinful culture. A very unsympathetic evil culture. So teach the New Testament. Teach the Scriptures. And live them in front of your people.
- Show how the Scripture works out in a daily life. Sermons must not miss application—and not just as a five-minute add-on at the end of the sermon, but all throughout the teaching. Tell how it works! *Then and now!*
- Okay, I am obviously stretching the question a little to make a point, but I think a healthy contribution to teaching confidence is a strong pastoral prayer that’s planned and an important part of the worship service. People need to hear their pastor pray for them and about our culture and our lifestyle in this evil world.

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