

1-1-2011

# The moral and ethical influence by the Christian faith community upon the non-Christian population of Harney County, Oregon

John D. Stauffer

*George Fox University*, [jdstauff@georgefox.edu](mailto:jdstauff@georgefox.edu)

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

---

## Recommended Citation

Stauffer, John D., "The moral and ethical influence by the Christian faith community upon the non-Christian population of Harney County, Oregon" (2011). *Doctor of Ministry*. Paper 9.  
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/9>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolf@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolf@georgefox.edu).

GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

THE MORAL AND ETHICAL INFLUENCE BY THE CHRISTIAN FAITH  
COMMUNITY UPON THE NON-CHRISTIAN POPULATION OF HARNEY  
COUNTY, OREGON

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

JOHN D. STAUFFER

PORTLAND, OREGON

SEPTEMBER

2011

# DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

**JOHN D. STAUFFER**

**DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2011**

**TITLE:**

**THE MORAL AND ETHICAL INFLUENCE BY THE CHRISTIAN FAITH  
COMMUNITY UPON THE NON-CHRISTIAN POPULATION OF  
HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON**

**WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ  
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN  
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY IN  
LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION DEGREE**

*Dwight D. Vandave*

SIGNATURE

*11/1/11*

DATE

*R. Larry Shelton*

SIGNATURE

*11/1/11*

DATE



**GEORGE FOX**  
EVANGELICAL  
SEMINARY

Copyright 2011 by John D. Stauffer

All Rights Reserved.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New Revised  
Standard Version of the Bible

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM .....	1
<b>The Moral Vacuum</b> .....	1
<b>Narrative</b> .....	3
<b>Harney County Demographics</b> .....	6
<b>Addressing the Local Concerns</b> .....	7
II. A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR A MORAL INFLUENCE .....	12
<b>The Use of Scripture in Christian Ethics</b> .....	12
<b>Old Testament Ethical Teachings</b> .....	13
<b>New Testament Teaching on Moral and Ethical Character</b> .....	17
<b>Summary</b> .....	26
III. HISTORICAL MORAL INFLUENCE ON THE COMMUNITY BY THE CHURCH .....	30
<b>Early-American Church Moral Influence</b> .....	31
<b>Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Church Moral Influence</b> .....	35
<b>Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century Church Moral Influence</b> .....	45
<b>Summary</b> .....	57
IV. THE PROBLEMS FACING THE MORAL CONDITION OF HARNEY COUNTY .....	66
<b>The Problem in Harney County Oregon</b> .....	66
<b>Using Scripture as the Source for Change</b> .....	66
<b>Learning From Church History</b> .....	67

<b>Overview of the Problem in Harney County</b> .....	67
<b>How May the Christian Faith Community Influence the Children?</b> .....	69
V. HOW IS THE CHURCH TO MODEL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES / VALUES TO A POSTMODERN SOCIETY THAT DOES NOT SHARE THE SAME WORLDVIEW?.....	82
<b>Following the Scriptural Instruction</b> .....	83
<b>Influence of the Church's Mission</b> .....	93
<b>Spiritual Formation and Direction</b> .....	100
<b>Spiritual Formation of the Leadership and the Congregation</b> .....	102
<b>Where Can The Leadership Begin?</b> .....	108
<b>Non-Church Based Christian Influence</b> .....	110
<b>Christian Moral and Ethical Influence in Harney County Oregon</b> .....	112
VI. CONCLUSIONS .....	120
WORKS CITED .....	129

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over a six year period I spent much time in research, writing and re-writing this dissertation. At times I felt as though I would lay aside the project and count it only as an effort of experience.

With the unending encouragement of my wonderful wife, Catherine, I persevered. I thank her for the hours of help that she gave to me through pre-editing, giving up of time and money to allow for me to complete the work.

I thank the several different professors and students who offered their encouragement and advice. I thank specifically Tom Johnson who read selected parts of the dissertation and offered content advice. Dan Brunner and MaryKate Morse who continued to tell me that even with age God will use my devotion to study and writing. I thank Chuck Conniry who spent time in prayer, counsel, editing and being my friend when I did not have one to empty my heart. My spirits were lifted after conversations with Larry Shelton who encouraged me to do the work because I wanted to leave a legacy for my children and grandchildren that provided encouragement to them to continue to advance their own lives in Christ. I thank Dee Small for being my guide through the process; she was my cheerleader at the front desk.

I thank my family members who prayed for me and always lifted me with words of praise and comments of pride: my brothers, Larry Stauffer and Ed Stauffer; my sister, Norma Harris; my nephew, Pastor Craig Harris; my daughters, Sally, Misty, Wendy and Shannon; and my mother, Bertha Stauffer.

I lastly want to give my thanks to Dr. Derek Voorhees for his final editing work and for the teaching that he provided during the last year of the writing. His words of

encouragement, instruction and critique gave me the courage to make the changes and do the work.

Finally through all of the work I know that, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)



## **ABSTRACT**

The principal problem that this paper addresses is the diminishment of the Christian church's moral influence in Harney County, Oregon. The author asks two primary questions: (1) what are the role and the responsibility of the Christian faith community with respect to influencing the wider culture of Harney County, and (2) how should pastoral leaders of Harney County, Oregon facilitate collaborative efforts among their respective congregations to enhance the Christian faith's collective influence on our community.

Chapter One introduces the problem through a narrative based on the author's local ministry setting of Harney County. Chapter Two presents scriptural evidence to community and family toward raising productive citizens and forming cohesive family units that practice Christian moral principles. Chapter Three presents a history of the Christian church's involvement in influencing families toward a Christian moral and ethical life.

Chapter Four describes the problems that arise from the moral decline of the Harney County culture and demonstrates the factuality of this decline in light of local and national data. Chapter Five provides concrete recommendations for churches toward influencing the community through the presentations of what has worked in churches across America. A summary of the problem, (1) what is the role and the responsibility of the Christian faith community with respect to influencing the wider culture, and (2) a conclusion summary of how should pastoral leaders of Harney County, Oregon facilitate the undertaking of such a ministry is discussed in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

#### **The Moral Vacuum**

Members of contemporary North-American society share a certain degree of moral knowledge. Most mainstream Americans, for example, commonly abhor such societal blights as genocide, despotism, racism, and pedophilia. Alternatively, most revere social virtues like honesty, kindness, altruism, and tolerance for ethnic and religious diversity. However, the list of moral ambiguities abounds, and it appears to be getting longer by the day.<sup>1</sup> Americans find themselves of late relinquishing their moral compasses to lawmakers, pollsters, and ballot boxes. Judges in some states have sanctioned gay marriage while lawmakers in other states have taken the matter to vote.<sup>2</sup> Stem cell research, which profits in part from the genetic material of aborted fetuses, creates moral quandaries for scientists, religious leaders, and politicians alike.<sup>3</sup> Ever-widening holes in the planet's ozone layer, along with ever-shrinking ice caps in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Audi, professor of business ethics at University of Notre Dame, identifies ten challenges for contemporary ethics: (1) the religion-politics problem, (2) the religious sensibilities problem, (3) the gap between ethics and technology, (4) the problem of the moribund mind in the living body, (5) self-indulgence, (6) insularity (the opposite of cosmopolitanism), (7) the role model problem, (8) the media problem, (9) the globalization problem, and (10) the low level of discourse. Robert Audi, *Moral Value and Human Diversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), 28-34.

<sup>2</sup> Currently same-sex marriage is sanctioned in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, and Vermont. However, California voters in May 2008 said yes to Proposition 8, which overturns a California Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-sex marriages. Maine voters in November 2009 struck down a referendum that would have allowed same-sex couples to marry. Thirty-one states now have legislation in place banning same-sex marriage, but the matter is far from settled.

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent summary of perspectives regarding the ethical and political debates over stem-cell research, see Michael Ruse and Christopher A. Pynes, eds., *The Stem Cell Controversy: Debating the Issues* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003).

Polar Regions, have catapulted care-of-earth concerns to the moral realm.<sup>4</sup> While the list of moral ambiguities grows longer, the rate at which America's commonly held body of moral knowledge shrinks in a manner comparable to the melting of Arctic ice. At the same time, like holes in the ozone, there appears to be an ever-widening moral vacuum that has engulfed American culture, leaving many individuals and families on their own in terms of moral decision-making. Conspicuously absent in public moral discourse is the Christian church.

It is commonly believed that the Religious Right is a major player in America's moral debates. That is less the case than mainstream media has led Americans to believe. According to statistical data recently compiled by journalist Christine Wicker, the Religious Right comprises a fringe group that is less than 2 percent of the American population. Pollsters typically report that evangelicals as a whole account for about 25 percent of the American populace – and of that number, roughly 20 percent belong to the Religious Right. That assumption, however, fails to account for the fact that the majority of survey respondents do not actually attend church or adhere to evangelical beliefs or practices. Says Wicker, "If we judge the number of evangelicals in America by beliefs and commitment or by real numbers inside the churches, we find that evangelicals aren't one out of four Americans, or 25 percent, but one out of fourteen, or 7 percent." In fact, not a single American city, according to Wicker, "has a percentage of believing

---

<sup>4</sup> According to Steven Bouma-Prediger, leading scholar in theology, ethics, and the environment, at stake in care-of-earth matters is nothing less than our understanding of God. Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 14. For information regarding the factuality of global warming and the diminution of polar ice, see the EPA's Climate Change Site, which "offers comprehensive information on the issue of climate change in a way that is accessible and meaningful to all parts of society – communities, individuals, business, states and localities, and governments." <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/> (accessed October 31, 2009).

evangelicals as high as one out of four.”<sup>5</sup> And if the total number of evangelicals averages one in fourteen Americans, members of the Religious Right account for only 1.4 percent, or less than one in seventy Americans.

Most non-church-going Americans in fact do not look to any facet of the Christian church as the sole repository of moral knowledge. One recent survey conducted by Barna Group showed that while most Americans consider personal faith to be an important source of moral guidance, “a huge majority of adults pick and choose what they believe rather than adopt a church or denomination’s slate of beliefs.”<sup>6</sup> The church’s waning influence is at least one contributing factor to America’s ever-increasing moral vacuum.

### **Narrative**

I became acutely aware of these twin problems – the moral devolution of American families and the church’s apparent disengagement – while working as a counselor in a mental health clinic. I consulted with individuals, couples, and families assigned by the clinic’s supervisor. Most clients presented family relationship issues. These problems were sometimes rooted in child behavioral problems, which brought the family into the local juvenile-court system. In other instances, couples with marital difficulties were engaged in last-ditch efforts to save a marriage damaged by unfaithfulness by one or both spouses, communication problems, or a general loss of interest in each other. In almost every instance, individuals and families were coping with

---

<sup>5</sup> Christine Wicker, *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation: The Surprising Crisis Inside the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 92-93.

<sup>6</sup> Barna Group, “Christianity Is No Longer Americans’ Default Faith,” <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/15-christianity-is-no-longer-americans-default-faith> (accessed October 28, 2009).

major life issues without any thought of consulting a pastor or church members, even if they regularly attended a Christian congregation.

During the same period of time I also served as a local pastor and member of Harney County Ministerial Association. At one ministerial meeting, I asked my pastoral colleagues whether they had observed in their respective congregations the same phenomenon that I had encountered in my counseling work. The ministers confirmed that they too had noticed a growing disconnect between the church and community; even among members of their own congregations who seemed disinclined to trust church leaders and fellow members to help them deal with difficult issues in life. The pastors at that meeting agreed to revisit the matter at a subsequent gathering.

At its next scheduled meeting, I read a statement to the Harney County ministers' group, which encapsulated the concern for our community's youth and families. It read in part:

The philosophy of moral relativism is pervasive in our culture today. Its popularity is not limited to "the big city" or metropolitan communities alone. The blurring or elimination of moral lines has become widespread throughout our schools – both public and private, including many Christian schools. There seems to be a desire to relegate matters of "right and wrong" to the realm of personal opinion. Every day our parishioners are bombarded with the ideology of moral relativism in movies and television programs – and they end up uncritically embracing a value system that should have no place in the Christian life. Moral relativism in fact has become so pervasive among Christians that many are now convinced that we cannot speak of "sin" in the proper sense without being labeled judgmental or worse...a Fundamentalist. Christian morals have given way to "personal morals," and one's personal morals are whatever one chooses to make of them.

Those in our churches who have embraced this new morality look to the adherents of traditional Christian morality as somehow antiquated and out of touch with mainstream thought. If for some reason one does not accept the "anything goes" philosophy, one is considered a bigot. Terms such as "your truth is your truth, not

my truth” and “what is right for you is not necessarily right for me” are now widely held convictions in most Christian communities.

As pastors and community leaders, it is our responsibilities to help the members of our churches discern matters of morality and immorality. It falls to us to model the synergistic balance between “grace and truth,” the way Jesus modeled it as he cared for the downtrodden, set the prisoners free, and helped the widow. Jesus demonstrates that moral conviction and social compassion are two sides of the same coin. Our churches will only be able reconnect with the world that desperately needs them when they become communities of love; communities that are engaged in the love-infusing sacraments of “truth telling” and “grace giving.”

The pastor of the Catholic Church began the meeting with prayer, and then deferred to the Lutheran pastor who opened with a plea for help, “Before I came to the meeting today, I sat with a member of my congregation whose son revealed that he was part of a pact to complete suicide.”

The priest asked, “What can we do to address this problem in our community?”

The Assembly of God pastor responded, “It seems as though what has been a known problem within the community over the past fifteen years is now becoming a part of our congregational families.”

I replied, “Perhaps we should consider combining the forces of our individual churches to create a combined influence that reaches out to the individuals and families both inside and outside the walls of our churches.”

The pastor of the Christian Church suggested that this would take more than better advertising campaigns; it would require members of the ministerial association “to provide help to the families of the community by presenting services that cannot be afforded otherwise.”

I said, “We need to take a look at combining the expertise within each congregation to be able to use talent, space and time effectively and to identify what we

can do to begin the process of reaching families that do not attend. Yet, we must continue to involve the families in our own congregations, beyond our scheduled services and programs.”

### **Harney County Demographics**

Harney County is the largest geographical county in Oregon, covering 10,134.33 square miles. The US Census Bureau’s 2008 population estimate (the most recent available numbers at the writing of this dissertation) puts Harney County’s population at 6,747, which reflects an 11.3 percent reduction in population between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2008.<sup>7</sup> Although the county has eighteen active congregations, regular attendees make up a very small percentage of the total population – less than 21 percent. Harney County’s per-capita church attendance is the lowest of any county in the nation, well below the national average of 39 percent.<sup>8</sup> The average attendance per congregation in Harney County churches is 79, and the decline in church membership appears to be on pace with that of the county’s population.<sup>9</sup>

The county has two principal communities and several smaller ranch communities with established names and local schools. There is a diverse representation of faith-based organizations within Harney County.<sup>10</sup> Each town has its own seat of government, several common ties that consist of school athletic events, interchurch youth groups, and shared

---

<sup>7</sup> State & County QuickFacts, U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/41025.html> (accessed October 31, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> “Is a Bad Economy Good for Church Attendance?” *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (March 12, 2009), <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=405> (accessed October 31, 2009). It bears repeating that these numbers, in the light of Christine Wicker’s research, which I cited above, are very likely inflated.

<sup>9</sup> Harney County Church Attendance Record Keepers, interview by the Author, December 2007.

<sup>10</sup> *Phone Book, Steens County*, Yellow Pages Church Listings, 2008 ed., By the Numbers.

community centers. Cattle ranching is the economic mainstay of Harney County.<sup>11</sup> The main towns support the high school, Bureau of Land Management office, Forest Service, a recreational vehicle component factory, and a laminate truss mill. The government seats, schools, and two major supporting industries hold the county's communities together.<sup>12</sup>

As of September 2009, Harney County's unemployment average is the highest of any county in Oregon at 15.0 percent, well above both the current state unemployment of 11.5 percent or the current national rate of 9.8 percent.<sup>13</sup> Youth suicide is the highest in the state, based upon per-capita statistics.<sup>14</sup> The state, county, and city governments provide financially for most social service needs, and churches make modest financial contributions. For example, the ministerial association provides funds for a variety of needs among local residents and transients. Still, it is fair to say that the church's engagement in community matters is minimal...and lukewarmness is what the community reciprocates to its local congregations.

### **Addressing the Local Concerns**

The major social issues in Harney County, coupled with the growing disconnect between the community and its local churches, raises some key questions for the county's

---

<sup>11</sup> "Gateway to the Steens," Harney County Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.harneycounty.com/LilRedCone/History.htm> (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> "Burns, Oregon," <http://www.oregon.com/towns/burns/burns.cfm> (accessed October 31, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. "Economic Time Series Page: Harney County, OR, Oregon; Percent; NSA," <http://www.eco.nomagic.com/em-cgi/data.exe/blsla/laucn41025003> (accessed October 31, 2009); "Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Summary (October 21, 2009)," United States Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm> (accessed October 31, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> "Burns, Oregon."



pastors and religious leaders: What can the church do to support the citizens of Harney County (21 percent of whom belong to local congregations) as they cope with the devastating outcomes of sky-high unemployment, juvenile delinquency, teen suicide, marital problems, drug and alcohol addiction, sexual immorality, domestic violence, and the host of other social ills that reek havoc on them? Is it even possible for local congregations to gain the reputation of being the county's best places to turn when facing the crises that result from life in a moral vacuum?

While government-sponsored social-service agencies have their place, they cannot (nor are they allowed to) function as the community's moral base. Local churches, on the other hand, exist as oases of unconditional love...at least when they embrace the dual themes of Incarnation: *grace* and *truth*. When churches embrace the mission that Scripture entrusts to them, they practice forms of kerygmatic engagement in which they function as *truth-tellers* and *grace-givers*. They engage in no-strings-attached services that call for no form of repayment or obligation.

I asked my association colleagues to identify major service areas that we could offer to the community, services that government-sponsored agencies were not fulfilling. I also asked whether any of them would be willing to open their church buildings to provide these services. Faith Baptist Church, for example, has the largest facility in the county and would easily be able to provide several private rooms for before- and after-school programs to parents who could not afford to take their children to professional caregivers. This one service could be operated, monitored, and funded by Harney County faith communities and provide safety and nurture to children who would otherwise be left unsupervised by working parents.

Harney County's pastors discussed the church's ability and responsibility to serve the community in ways that fulfill Christ's purpose in the world. They agreed that the church's responsiveness to the community's needs should not be based on the promise of numerical growth or monetary gain, but simply on the mission of incarnating Christ and Christ's ministry through community services.

The county's congregants include professional educators, medical professionals, craftspeople, and other persons who can be challenged to emulate Christ in the community by serving the community's children. The ministerial association members agreed that they should offer more programs for individuals outside the church community. They agreed that these programs must emulate Christ beyond religious services and bring him into the community. They also agreed to include the leader of the local Young Life program in the planning and implementing of this proposal.

The programs described in this paper will focus first on those with the greatest needs. This requires interviewing individual families and having available persons who find needy children throughout the county. Association members believe they will find families in need and be able to meet the needs. Our conversations and dreaming sessions have yielded two questions, which have in turn guided our thinking and planning: What is the role and the responsibility of Harney County's churches with respect to influencing the wider culture, and how should we as pastoral leaders facilitate collaborative efforts among our respective congregations to enhance the church's collective influence on Harney County as a whole?

The association members agreed to continue discussing the issue of moral decline within their churches and community, and to formulate collaborative services that will

supplement (or provide more effective, cost-free alternatives to) those offered by governmental agencies like the Department of Human Resources and the Juvenile Department, which cannot by their very design serve as resources of moral knowledge. The ministerial association members also agreed to develop a plan to teach local congregations to reach out to local leaders who are church members. While moral interpretations differ from church to church, even though most appeal to Scripture as the primary basis of moral knowledge, association members believe they can find enough common ground jointly to extend Christian moral influence into the community.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with the District Attorney of Grant County. While we were talking I asked, “How can the Christian faith community reach beyond its in-church programs and more effectively influence the youth and families that your social-service agencies deal with on a regular basis?” The District Attorney responded:

I firmly believe that church systems help provide the moral backbone and structure for a community. . . . The strength of the church system in the community has high influence on the community’s tolerance and perception of values. I think that history definitely shows how important a role the church plays in youth and families outside the structured activities . . . a church’s teachings on biblical values, behaviors, sin and our individual accountability influence individuals and groups alike. Christian values help people in their day-to-day decisions. So the congregations that tend to be more active in the community have more influence on community norms and attitudes. Churches that are more engaged in community life influence youth and families well beyond their worship services and other regularly scheduled activities. Church programs have a lot less influence on society than do the members of those churches when they get out into the community and let the Holy Spirit breathe on everyone they come in contact with.<sup>15</sup>

The Harney County District Court Judge, who is a past co-leader of the local Young Life program, said that Young Life has always included various members of local

---

<sup>15</sup> Christie Timko, personal interview, Canyon City Oregon, December 26, 2006.

churches, but it has not emphasized family outreach and influence. Instead the emphasis has been to provide a Christian-based social influence for community youth. Young Life involvement has generally been an extension of the individual churches because of small youth populations in each church. Young Life is an ecumenical youth group that exists in lieu of each church's having a youth group of its own. The judge agreed that local churches must cooperate actively to influence community morals.<sup>16</sup>

The Harney County Christian faith community continues to reflect on potential best practices by which to engage individuals, families, and children and manifest the dual incarnation themes of grace and truth. Scripture serves as a touchstone in these conversations and the concrete needs of the community serve as the fulcrum of moral engagement.

This chapter has considered the moral vacuum into which our nation has fallen and the overall lack of relevancy demonstrated by America's churches as a resource of moral knowledge. Moral knowledge has receded while moral conundrums have been on the rise, bringing ever-increasing angst and social maladies. While individuals, families, and children have suffered the consequences of this moral drift, mainstream American culture has seldom looked to the church for answers. Harney County is no exception. Religious leaders have begun the process of reengaging their community, but they have a long way to go. The next chapter will consider the scriptural basis for the church's involvement with society as a resource of moral knowledge and the means by which to engage in morally informed social service.

---

<sup>16</sup> William Cramer Jr., personal interview, Burns, Oregon, September, 2007.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR A MORAL INFLUENCE

#### **The Use of Scripture in Christian Ethics**

The Bible's foundational authority has not changed in the church; however, the interpretation has changed to accommodate modern lifestyles. Christians can believe that the authority of Scripture has not changed and that it is not dependent upon the church to decide its authority. William Webster, a former Catholic, is a businessman and director of Christian Resources Inc., a book and tape ministry devoted to teaching and evangelism, writes:

Scripture has authority, as both Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants will agree, because it is the Word of God. But Scripture is not the Word of God merely because the Church says it is. Scripture's authority is derived from its intrinsic nature as a communication from God to man—it has an authority independent of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments emphasizes that God's covenant people are to exert a positive moral influence on the cultures they inhabit. This chapter will consider the scriptural basis for the church's involvement with society as a resource of moral knowledge, and the means by which to engage in morally informed social service. The author of this paper suggests that the Scripture is the ultimate source of direction toward how to live out our lives. As Paul tells us, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16 KJV). The author also recognizes that the

---

<sup>1</sup> William Webster, "The Authority of the Scripture," Christian Resources, Inc., <http://www.christiantruth.com> (accessed, August 24, 2008).

references used in this paper are not all inclusive, nor that every reader will be able to apply each Scripture reference to their own life application.

In arguing that the Christian faith community is to be society's leader in moral discourse the author places greater focus upon the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew, the exhortations of Paul in Corinthians and the book of James in the New Testament. These texts provide a basis for the church's responsibility as a moral influence on today's culture.

### **Old Testament Ethical Teachings**

One important distinctive of Old Testament Scripture is its historical recounting of concrete social situations in which God's people were called upon to engage in moral discernment. Old Testament Scripture provides advice concerning a wide variety of moral behavior, starting with how children should regard their parents: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you" (Exod. 10:12).

The prophets often make sweeping statements about social justice, but they always refer to specific injustices. The Old Testament writers do not entertain philosophical ethics, the Ten Commandments gave the Hebrew people the concrete moral rules to live by: "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, and you shall not give false witness" (Exod. 20:14-16).

The author of Exodus 20:2-17 presents the moral imperatives God gave Moses and recorded originally upon stone tablets, and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 reiterates the same instructions. Christians and Jews refer to these imperatives as the Ten Commandments.

Over the centuries people have applied the specific laws to their lives and adjusted them as society evolved.

The Old Testament book of Leviticus is often referred to as “wisdom literature” because it deals with laws and regulations for the believer of the time, not because it is a part of the Bible most recognized as “wisdom literature.” “If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible” (Lev. 5:1). The wisdom of this instruction is in doing what is right in a given situation, and Leviticus provides examples of moral instruction that can apply to contemporary Christian life.

“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the LORD. Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD” (Lev. 19:15-18).

In light of New Testament teachings, the author of this paper believes Old Testament scriptural imperatives direct Christians to be active moral influences upon believing and non-believing communities. The family is the place to begin such practices because God created Adam and Eve as the first family and the origin of all other families (Gen. 2:18-25). When a family makes unwise decisions, it will not prosper. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s rules and their family, and all the families originating from it, were impacted negatively (Gen. 3:8-24). After the fall, Adam and Eve were responsible for following God’s instructions: “So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden

to work the ground from which he had been taken . . . Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain . . . Later she gave birth to his brother Abel” (Gen. 3: 23, 4:1). God required them to continue humankind as God intended. Adam and Eve did not have the Holy Scripture to instruct them; they were given this directive directly from God, “to the woman he said . . . , and to Adam he said” (Gen. 3:16, 17).

God’s intention appears in Genesis 12 when He established a new family from the existing chaotic and rebellious society. “God chose Abraham and his descendants through whom His holy purpose was preserved and multiplied, and God chose Abraham to leave his known world and go where He appointed him” (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham was not perfect, but God used him to bring great blessings to the world through his family. In the contemporary world, God uses the family as a platform to expand His holy and good purposes, and a believing family can practice and support community ethical standards. The twenty-first century community experiences chaos and rebellion. The Christian family can demonstrate community solidarity and moral behavior by becoming a part of the wider community of families.

Children are the gift of God, a source of joy and pleasure, and the Scripture calls them a “reward” (Psa. 127:3). For example, Jacob’s wife Leah spoke of one of her sons as a “dowry” and a “wedding gift” from God (Gen. 30:20). Scripture asserts that these gifts of children are “remembered” by God (Gen. 30:20, Gen. 30:22, 1 Sam. 1:11, 19). Scripture pays holy reverence to children, and members of the Christian faith community should treat them with high regard and equip them properly. The Christian community must remember that these gifts from God are not only gifts to their parents, but are gifts to the community. Since each child is a gift from God to parents and community, all



should accept the joy and pleasure that they bring, and respond as Jeremiah did when he recalled how his own birth made his father, Hilkiyah, “very glad” (Jer. 20:15).

The character development of children is formed through the training they receive from their parents, and Scripture reinforces this point negatively and positively. Stated negatively, “The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother” (Prov. 29:11). Stated positively, “Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it,” (Prov 22:6). The author of this paper does not believe this Scripture means children should be forced to believe exactly what their parents believe. Rather, this is a scriptural instruction to train a child in wisdom, and children will respond positively through proper discipline.

The next section will show how Jesus used Old Testament teaching while explaining His role upon the earth. Christ’s statement, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17, KJV). He begins His sermon on the mount giving moral instruction not just to his disciples but to all human kind. The Old Testament is the foundation upon which the teachings of Jesus, and subsequently Paul and James, build the case for the Christian to be an ethical and moral influence upon the non-believing world.

The author of Matthew writes as one who clearly, although not a Jew, understood the Jewish person well enough to narrate the words of Jesus. And to make significant comment about what Jesus had to say about the human character and what the human Christian character should look like. In addition, the writer of the book often and with accuracy used Old Testament quotations to make the point of what was said credible among the Jewish community. Paul and James added their own expertise through

ministry contact, and life itself, and often referred back to the Old Testament Scripture. It is the belief of this author that in order to become the Christian moral and ethical influence upon the non-believer one must be familiar with the basis of the teaching of the Old Testament, and its use as the foundation for the teaching from the New Testament.

### **New Testament Teaching on Moral and Ethical Character**

Old Testament moral code was fulfilled in Christ and will be revealed as such in the following section. The New Testament gospel and letters gave the early Christian community instructions for moral living in its historical context. God intends that these instructions be used across the ages for teaching His people inside and outside of Christendom. Beginning in the book of Matthew we read the words of Jesus, “Ye are the light of the world, A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid....Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13ff, KJV). He reiterates the law recorded in Genesis 20 by telling the hearer, that, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19 KJV). In the above scripture, Jesus tells us what we should not do, but also what we ought to do. He also tells us that He is the example, “....Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19).

The Christian Church views the Old Testament law as fulfilled through the coming of Christ, not as antiquated restrictions. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17 KJV). Jesus

continues to admonish by telling the hearer, “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20 KJV).

Having forbidden anger and evil speech toward a brother, Jesus teaches an ethical standard when he teaches the proper course to be pursued when we have committed an offense. When we have offended one, a Christian or non Christian we are to be reconciled to that person, by making the proper amends. “Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison” (Matt. 5:24-25 KJV). As Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount he describes each human attribute and the benefits or consequences of each. In doing so he details the realm of ethical behavior that ultimately presents the human morality in terms of either a Christian or non Christian. He begins by declaring who the “blessed” are “...the poor of spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven...they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth...” (Matt. 5:3ff, KJV).

Jesus tells us as believers we are, “...the salt of the earth...” (Matt. 5:13, KJV). And he continues by explaining that if we, “...have lost his (our) savor where with shall it be salted” (Matt. 5:13, KJV). This author believes that in the context of the thesis of his paper, that the Christian faith does have a responsibility to be active influences of our faith to the non - Christian community. And if Christians do not become strong Christian influences within the population in which we live we have, in a sense, lost our savor as

witnesses. Jesus' message continues with the admonishment to, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, KJV). While being the salt of the earth and letting our lights shine, we ought to be able to use the instruction of Christ to the hearers of his days on earth, to practice the seemingly uncomfortable Christian attributes taught in the beatitudes.

The New Testament Scripture demonstrates that the early church embraced community moral standards based upon Jesus' teachings. Jesus Christ's teachings on earth were driven by the divine and human impetus of Christ as human and God. Jesus was God and human at the same time, and he taught God's wisdom. He encouraged people to do the right things, and he modeled how individuals should interact with others in their communities: "When I was hungry you fed me" (Matt. 25:31-46).

Jesus performed good acts in the face of the normative law, and he used human need to teach ethical and moral action:

"For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day. <sup>9</sup> And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: <sup>10</sup> And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. <sup>11</sup> And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? <sup>12</sup> How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. <sup>13</sup> Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other" (Matt 12:8-13 KJV).

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

Jesus spoke about the blessed and moved immediately to the believer as a moral influence upon the world: "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again. It is no longer good for anything...you are the light of the

world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:13, 14). Christians can use these teachings to lead others to redemption, and Christians can be influencers of Christian moral and ethical behavior.

Considering the above referenced Scripture in which Jesus says to the believer, verses 13 and 14. He makes a distinction between the believer and the non believer. He knows, as do the hearers, that salt is needed then as it is in the twenty first century because the world is decaying around them and us. Christianity offers the “Light.” Let your light so shine before men...” (Matt. 5:16, KJV). By this Jesus is telling his disciples, as well as the twenty-first century Christian, to be activists not isolationist in our Christian belief. Jesus is telling the hearer that if we imitate darkness, we will be no different than the world. The message Jesus is giving to us is that we cannot be effective if we are unwilling to be a distinctively different influence upon the world that we live in.

Unless we use the instruction of Jesus in our individual lives, in the life of the church and in the way we interact with the non Christian. We cannot live our Christianity in isolation. It is only when we live our beliefs in the community that we have an impact. Jesus made that clear to the disciples. And the Scripture, if it is profitable for instruction, admonishes the twenty first century Christian to move outside the church and into the community with our Christian distinction. By his words Jesus is instructing us to be the Christian that he wants us to be, and to live out the beatitudes in the world.

Jesus taught about many areas of life and amplified morality’s scope: “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment” (Matt.5:21). He did not stop with that and made the point stronger when he said: “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be

subject to judgment” (Matt.5:22). Jesus instructed the hearer and future readers of the word that they cannot be witnesses for Christ if their actions do not emulate his example. Jesus expressed an extreme morality when he said that although adultery is bad, “anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

Jesus taught moral and ethical standards concerning divorce, taking of oaths, the principal of eye for eye revenge and the need to love enemies and the unlovely. He taught about righteous acts before men and the need to give to others in need privately and without recognition (Matt. 5:31ff).

Perhaps one of the most poignant teachings Christian can use in addition to the Sermon on the Mount, as they influence others, is Jesus’ teaching about forgiveness. Christians may harm Christ’s cause if they limit forgiveness. Jesus prayed: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors . . . For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matt. 6:9-14).

Matthew, the author of the New Testament book of Matthew, wrote with the expectation that his audience was predominantly Jewish. He expected them to understand and to be familiar with the allusions to Hebrew Scripture. He used the teaching words of Jesus and his use of Old Testament Scripture in his message of righteous living. Much of what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount was a focus upon the ethical and moral lives of his followers.

Following Christ’s example, Paul addressed many issues concerning morality in the Corinthian church. Corinth was a large city and its culture was influenced by Greek

philosophy and placed great value upon wisdom. The moral issue was of great concern to Paul based on information he received from sources who believed that some worship practices were contrary to the teachings of Paul and Jesus.

Paul writes to the Church in Corinth with instructions concerning the immoral behaviors of male members of the church, “I am writing you that you must not associate with sexually immoral people, not all meaning the people of this world who are immoral” (I Cor. 5:9).

At Corinth the apostle Paul established a flourishing church made up of a cross section of the worldly minded people. There was legalized temple prostitutes, fraudulent business conducted on the temple grounds, and the Mediterranean world relished the lack of standards and the freedom of thought that prevailed in the city. These were the people who eventually made up the Corinthian church.

Family is featured prominently in Scripture and is also the focus of many scientific, religious, and sociological studies. The biblical narrative describes God’s intention for family, and His intention remains. It is the Christian family’s responsibility to be an example and influence the community outside the church.

<sup>6</sup> Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. <sup>7</sup> Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. <sup>8</sup> Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. <sup>9</sup> Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. <sup>10</sup> Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. <sup>11</sup> Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Cor. 10:6-11 KJV)

The moral model the Christian faith community can use as a community influence inspires living a good life and promises longevity. Paul addressed the immoral conduct occurring in the church 1 Cor. 5:1-2, 6-8. Paul instructed the Church about personal behaviors that often are not recognized by the perpetrator or the church as immoral: “Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are” (1 Cor. 5:6). Paul also addressed immorality issues: “I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, and idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat” (1 Cor. 5:9-11).

Paul provides strict instructions about behavior of believers. This instruction can apply to twenty-first century believers personally and as they exercise moral influence in their communities. Paul clarifies his statements on sexual morality lest there be any misunderstanding among those who profess Christianity:

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body . . . Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. (1 Cor. 6:13-17).

In 2 Corinthians, Paul addressed the requirement to be a forgiving person in Christ: If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of



you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead you ought to forgive and comfort him . . . I urge you therefore to reaffirm your love for him (2 Cor 2:5-7).

Paul encouraged the Christian to deal lovingly with those in the church during and following a fallen state. He writes that it is incumbent upon the Christian to live as they profess and to display moral and ethical influence by “setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor. 4:2). Paul states that “we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’” (2 Cor. 4:5). In 2 Corinthians, Paul assures believers that something changed in them forever when they became believers: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come . . . this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:17, 18). This is another testimony of a Christian’s moral influence on un-churched persons.

In 1 Corinthians we can discern that Paul was dealing with a church that was filled with immorality. Although the people of the church were believers they continued to hold onto immoral, selfish and contentious ways of the non believing Corinthian population. In the following section James also deals with the immoral behavior of the believer and non believer.

The author of James writes about morality and moral influence. James discusses behaviors by Christians that may be observed by the non-believers, and which may lead them to Christ. The task is difficult: “Consider it pure joy, my brothers whenever you face trials . . . because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature” (Jas. 1:2). James teaches the believer to deal with life’s adversities and be willing to “listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you” (Jas. 1:19-20).

James addresses other ethical and moral behavior issues that, if not attended to, can have a negative moral influence upon others. He writes: “Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also come in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘you stand there’ or ‘sit there’ . . . have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (Jas. 2:3-4). James emphasizes how believers influence others, and that just having faith in God is not sufficient. He states that the Christian must combine action with belief:

But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” . . . You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless . . . Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were acting together . . . you see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. . . . As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (Jas. 2:18-22, 24, and 26).

James speaks to the reward of consistency in our resistance to temptation to continue in behaviors as we had as unbelievers:

<sup>14</sup> But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. . . . <sup>19</sup> Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: <sup>20</sup> For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup> Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which

is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only....” (Jas. 2:14-15; 19-22, KJV).

James presents a theological statement of who God and Jesus are, yet he places a great focus upon the practical application of the teachings of Jesus to the everyday life of the hearer in order to attain the eternal life with Christ. In light of the thesis of this paper, James calls the hearer to not just be hearers of the word, but also doers. He instructs us to be influencers of the non believer to the Christian way of ethical and moral living.

### **Summary**

Matthew’s account of what Jesus had to say in the Sermon on the Mount has dealt with several key ethical and moral issues. Christ begins His sermon on the mount by making a declaration of who the blessed are, and by naming them as the salt and light of the earth. These statements known as the beatitudes set the stage for Jesus to say why he has come to live among human kind as the Christ, “...not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17 KJV), in reference to the Mosaic law of the Old Testament. Continuing on in the sermon, Jesus often cites Old Testament prophets and Scripture to admonish the hearer of what righteous living should be. Christ addresses the issue of divorce and once again uses a compare contrast of the Old Testament rule with what he believes the practice should be now. He speaks of taking oaths (swearing to God’s throne) and exhorts us to be willing to suffer wrong at the expense of being right. Christ tells the listener to love our enemies and to pray for them. He tells the believer that they must become perfect even as God is perfect.

I Corinthians is Paul’s letter to the Church in Corinth. His purpose for writing to the Church was multi fold. Paul was aware of the many moral issues and the divisions

that had come about as people developed special exclusive opposing groups making proclamations that they were either followers of Paul, Apollos, Peter or Christ. Paul also saw that there was a need to deal with questions that had been addressed to him in a letter from the church, and he wanted to present his own apostolic authority. All of these issues were problematic to the witness of the believer to the non believer.

Paul spoke to many of the same issues that Matthew records as being addressed by Jesus. Paul told the listener that they were not to place their faith in what men say, but that their faith should be placed in the wisdom of God. Paul noted in I Corinthians 3 that the good that they performed in a carnal state is considered as “wood, hay and straw” (1 Cor. 3:12 KJV). Paul admonished them to turn away from the external and to focus upon what counts with God, what is in the heart (Cor. 4:3). Paul placed emphasis upon the lack of discipline in the church and to the continued practice of immoral deeds. Paul’s admonishments were directed to the people in the church because of the influence that the world had upon them. And he argued that because of their lack of purity, such as incest and other deeds of sexual immorality, the unbeliever judged the church rather than the church being an example of Christian living to the unbeliever.

Paul spoke to the issues of marriage, celibacy, and divorce as Christ did, and the obligation of a person married to an unbeliever to remain in that union as a testimony and an action that could lead the unbelieving partner to Christ. He makes plain the loss of rewards while living in a carnal state, and points out that what is important to God is what the true motivation of our hearts becomes. He has made it clear to the church in Corinth that their pursuit of wisdom should be secondary to their pursuit of God provided

spirituality. As they are living, they are not the witness to the non-believer that God had intended.

James' teaching on works complemented Paul's teaching on faith. While Paul taught on our justification with God, James concentrated on the works that exemplify that justification. James was writing to Jews to encourage them to continue growing in this new Christian faith. James emphasizes that good actions will naturally flow from those who are filled with the Spirit. James' audience was the twelve tribes scattered across the nations.

James instructions begin with a list of ethical standards by which one professing Christianity should live: "...count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jas. 1:2, KJV). "...let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas 1:19, KJV). "...faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:17, KJV).

The book of James is a parallel to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. James reiterates that humankind cannot claim Jesus and continue to live in sin practicing immoral behaviors.

The three aforementioned books of Scripture support the claim of the author of this paper that there is a direct responsibility of the Christian believer to become an active example to the non believer. There is sufficient evidence in the referenced Scripture to support the teaching of the Christian faith that we are to be more than proclaimers of our faith but to become doers of the teachings of the faith, and thus influencers to the non Christian through the living out of our professions.

The New Testament instructs Christians to live a moral life and exert an ethical influence on un-churched persons. This review of Old and New Testament materials

demonstrates the centrality of ethical behavior in the Christian community, and its moral influence in the non-church community. The scriptural review provides a biblical foundation for this paper's thesis: The church does have a biblical and theological mandate to have a moral influence on the non-church community.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HISTORICAL MORAL INFLUENCE ON THE COMMUNITY BY THE CHURCH

Chapter Three will discuss the American Church history and how the Church has responded to the role of moral influence upon the community, briefly before early America, through the twentieth century, and into the new millennium. This Chapter will review problems that are of concern to the Harney County Oregon community, the community in which this author resides, with historical comment upon other communities as reference and comparison to Harney County, Oregon. There will be reference to periods of history, including the twenty-first centuries to show foundational systems that have become the Christian faith community in America. The key areas of research include the subjects that have affected the extent of and the lack of Christian ethical and moral influence. The author discusses American Church history with comments referencing the American political and citizen history concerning ethics and moral standards. The author also discusses the subjects of Enlightenment; Reformation of the Catholic Church and its specific influence; and the Protestant Churches and the broad influences that they have had in general and within the several denominations. The author will introduce the detractors' of the Christian ethical and moral influence from such phenomenon as moral relativism, Postmodernism, and post-Christendom that have to some extent been responsible for the decline of typical church attendance. There will be discussion of the move from Church-run public schools to government involvement of the overall administration of the schools. The author will also cover the areas of Christian Universities, the extra church programs to promote church growth such as Natural

Church Development, Seeker sensitive churches, and the positive role of the education of the lay member in such areas as spiritual formation and evangelism.

The intent for including that information is to show that there has always been a calling of Christians to respond to the thesis of this paper. The thesis being that the Christian faith community does have a role and responsibility to remain, and to return to being a Christian ethical and moral influence upon the non-believing community.

The middle-ages of Western Christendom are similar to the historical account of Israel. “In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the roads were abandoned; travelers took to winding paths” (Judges 5:6). “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 17:6). During that time, there was great civil and political uneasiness. There were wars and invasions by foreign countries. Not unlike today, there was a threat of anarchy from those who believed that only they were “right” in advocating a form of lawlessness that speaks to the lack of self-denial and unbridled response to the sensual urges of many. All of this speaks to a lack of strong moral influence from the early Christian church.

### **Early-American Church Moral Influence**

Because of the first Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, American religion became much more diverse in its expression than it had been in England and European countries. In England, a national church existed under the reign of Henry VIII. The freedom from England gained by the colonies offered the ability to practice religion in a personal manner, rather than according to the King’s reign.



Sydney E. Ahlstrom was an American historian professor at Yale University, and a specialist in religious history of the United States. He writes:

...the American colonies were developing in unexpected and unprecedented ways. Among other things, they had become the most thoroughly Protestant, Reformed, and Puritan commonwealths in the world. Indeed, Puritanism provided the moral and religious background of fully 75 percent of the people who declared their independence in 1776.<sup>1</sup>

The Puritan ethic was taking hold in America, and the influence of reformist evangelist gave the protestant worshiper an urgency to become serious about the purification of the church. Some of the colonists were satisfied to continue to be identified with the mother church of England and in so doing did not seem to recognize a need for moral cleansing. The New World Colonist, "...were determined to achieve a threefold program for purifying the visible church: through purging of popish remnants and the establishment of 'apostolic' principles of worship and church order."<sup>2</sup> The former group remained loyal to the Anglican Church of England and, "were content to accomplish their reforms within an Episcopal church under the crown's governance."<sup>3</sup>

The Puritans were not the quintessential element and met with resistance from some who wanted to stay close to the supervision of the mother church. Yet because of the Puritan zeal, there was a promotion of personal spiritual change if not for the entire church. "The Puritans were spiritual brethren with a practical mission. They called England, and later America, to a spiritual awakening."<sup>4</sup> The Puritans in early American

---

<sup>1</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A religious History of the American People*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973,124.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 128.

church history were a force to reckon with, both in the church and in government. Yet, the most poignant effect of the Puritan church in America was the call to the individual. “With regard to personal life, the Puritan demanded of himself – and of others—a reformation of character, the rejection of idle recreations and vain display, and sober, obedient godliness.”<sup>5</sup>

Following the American Revolutionary War there was an Americanized form of the European Enlightenment. This enlightenment was the country’s attempt to exercise a spiritual world point of view. That which is the practice of the individual or group living out of their hermeneutics of the theology of the Bible that was new world, yet without losing some of its roots to the European influence. Morality and ethics was a subject kept at the forefront of American politics to ensure that the corrupt government that was left behind was not reestablished on the new continent. The Americans used the Scottish political philosophy as the model for religion and politics in this new country. Noll is a professor of American Church History at Notre Dame University. He writes:

Americans found the Scottish philosophy useful in three ways: (1) for justifying the Revolution against Britain, (2) for outlining new principles of social order in the absence of the stability of British rule, and (3) for reestablishing the truths of Christianity in the absence of an established church. During the Revolution, the ethics of Scotland’s Francis Hutcheson provided a solid moral basis for resisting British tyranny....After the Revolution, principles of moral reasoning from Scottish sources were joined with insights from John Locke to provide a groundwork for the new Constitution.<sup>6</sup>

Many educators and scholars of the day were insistent that not only institutional (churches, universities and government) changes were needed, but that the individuals of

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>6</sup> Mark A. Noll. *A History of Christianity In the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992, 154-155.

each of these institutions must reform as well. Among those leading the way were Nathaniel William Taylor and Bennet Tyler. Nathaniel Taylor was an American Congregational theologian and a professor of didactic theology at Yale during the eighteenth hundreds. Tyler was a Yale graduate and a Congregational preacher. Each had a specific approach to how the human person becomes a depraved being.

Taylor's fundamental insistence was that no man becomes depraved but by his own act, for the sinfulness of the human race does not pertain to human nature as such. "Sin is in the sinning," and hence "original" only in the sense that it is universal... Taylor's famous phrase, "power to the contrary." As a free, rational, moral, creative cause, man is not part of the system of nature... Preachers must confront sinners with this fact...<sup>7</sup>

Taylor appealed to the scholar and the parishioner, and his religious thought did not escape the likes of Bennet Tyler who took opposition to his views. Bennet chose to remain convinced that human depravation occurred by God's election not by anything that humankind could control by choice.<sup>8</sup>

Martin E. Marty, a former professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School and an American Lutheran religious scholar, wrote:

In the early years of national life, white Anglo-Saxons had been statistically the overpowering force in the country, and Marty noted that this large segment of the population harbored a religious objective. They wished nothing less than to create a righteous empire, to develop a spiritual kingdom by converting all inhabitants to common beliefs and by influencing their activities through a legal infrastructure. As colonies became states in an atmosphere of free religion in a free society, Protestant spokespersons adapted their goals to those conditions. Voluntary churches flourished in a competitive ethos and found new agencies for perpetuating the old objective. In this regard, Marty pointed out those evangelical leaders wanted to do more than save souls. They viewed holiness as a necessary second step in conversion; changed hearts produced changed behavior. This twofold conception of reform was a dominant cultural influence in Protestant

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 419, 420.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 420.

America up to the Civil War. Evangelical proponents continually sought to "complete" the reformation of manners and the reformulation of morals which undergirded the lives of all citizens.<sup>9</sup>

### **Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Church Moral Influence**

The climate in America in the nineteenth century was toward a greater moral existence in all areas of the society. Moral reform in the American evangelical protestant movement in the nineteenth and twentieth century's shaped the way people thought about family, church, and the workplace. Each preceding century offers something to the new century, and leaves room for change to either lessen or increase apparent religious control over the parishioner. Moral reform in the nineteenth and twentieth century's was no exception. Some change occurred because of abuse of a behavior within the population.

Popular Catholic religious writer Father Charles E. Curran, a moral theologian holding a Doctorate in Sacred Theology, believes that the Catholic Church has for many years not even given thought to what it means to be a "good Catholic (Christian)"<sup>10</sup> and a "good American"<sup>11</sup> at the same time. Moreover the practice of morality, which is expected of any Catholic or Christian non-Catholic, has only been magnified in recent history because of the advent of personal life style revelations (i.e. homosexuality). The American social climate of tolerance, even within religious settings, resulted in the Catholic Church taking a closer look at its role in the community concerning ethics and morality. In the twenty-first century, the Catholic and Protestant church is experiencing a

---

<sup>9</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America," (New York: Dial, 1970); second edition issued as *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire* (New York: Scribner, 1986), 76-77, 90-91.

<sup>10</sup> Charles E. Curran, *American Catholic Social Ethics*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

dichotomy between its own academic scholarship, and Christian teachings within its own institutions. Father Curran also comments further concerning the Christian/Catholic social ethic:

In more contemporary times the social problem or question has broadened to consider other aspects, especially the political and the cultural. “Ethics” refers to a systematic, reflexive, and thematic discipline...in the light of the church-related aspects of Catholic social ethics. Catholic moral theology is intensely interested in asking how the church and individual Christians should act in the social realm.<sup>12</sup>

The twentieth century Protestant Churches struggled with Americanism and Protestantism in a similar way as the Catholic Church has, in that the church in the society reflected its belief system in the way that its congregants lived out their lives. Yet the church wanted to allow for individuals to express personal belief and morality within the community without crossing the prohibition of the church and state laws. Thus, the church recognized a “major concomitant of modernization” according to James Davison Hunter, who is the Labrosse-Levinson Distinguished Professor of Religion, Culture, and Social Theory at the University of Virginia and Executive Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture.<sup>13</sup> The American Evangelical churches recognize that there is a push toward self expression even in religion, while recognizing that it maintains its belief in remaining orthodox in its religious beliefs while being a part of society at large.

In spite of specific resistances, nonetheless, the onus of pressure would be on the adherents of the religious worldview to accommodate to the cognitive constraints of modernity by modifying the content and style of their beliefs. Even within religious traditions that are unusually intransigent—that is, resistant to these

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983, 13.

pressures (the orthodox and conservative traditions)—a measure of accommodations is predictable.<sup>14</sup>

The apparent popular moral focus of Protestant Churches was upon substance abuse, marital unfaithfulness, or duplicity in what the church taught and how its members lived out the teaching. Often the encouragement of family worship intended to cause family cohesiveness yet more of an emphasis was placed upon public or societal morality. Scholar and Christian author Mark Noll writes:

The older Protestant bodies continued also to dominate conceptions of public moral reform at the end of the nineteenth century. The drive to renovate society, which had loomed so large with the antebellum revivalists, continued as a potent force in American life at least through the First World War. Most Protestant reformers maintained that the key to changing society lay in converting individuals, who would then reorder their private lives.<sup>15</sup>

This practice became an outside-in attempt at forcing moral reformation upon the “head of household” persons thus bringing a form of spiritual leadership from the husband/father to the family. Mark Noll also states that “...most public-spirited Protestants still felt that the key to a better life together lay in person moral reform.”<sup>16</sup> This reform took its lead from earlier generations of moral reform instruction and religious enforcement by the church in medieval history. David F. Wells, Ph.D. who is the

Distinguished Senior Research Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, states that:

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Mark A. Noll. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992, 295.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

In the wider society, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the classical virtues came under fire from Enlightenment ideology, the Christian virtues in particular came under heavy bombardment, and slowly our language began to change...when we come into the modern period, and as communities begin to disappear, the virtues come to stand alone...the virtue of honor increasingly comes to be understood in terms of a social status that is not awarded because of moral desert but gained through wealth or birth.<sup>17</sup>

Robert Handy, a Baptist theologian and seminary professor at Union Theological Seminary, claims that into the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the American Evangelical movement found itself wrestling with the concept of its ethical and interpretive system. Moral and ethical living was predominant in the protestant church, which was key to the religious life in America and in particular the evangelical culture.<sup>18</sup>

Martin Marty claims that in the twentieth century within the protestant evangelical denominations there was specific attention paid to the holistic development of identified ethical and moral standards. Persons who claimed or professed to be “saved” would demonstrate particular behavior as seen in self-discipline toward noticeable acts. A moral and ethical Christian would be known to have an irrefutable sense of temperance, pragmatism, and sexual purity. The head of families, generally the male, would carry those behaviors into the work place and public appearance. The Christian worldview was closely connected to identifying religious and ethical practices as being inseparable.<sup>19</sup>

The protestant church in the latter, nineteenth and early twentieth century was concerned with the soul and the future of humankind. However, social justice was in the forefront.

The ministry leaders of the era saw a need to be concerned with what came after the

---

<sup>17</sup> David F. Wells, *Losing Our Virtue; Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Handy. *A Christian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Marty. *Righteous Empire*. New York: Dial, 1970, 162,179.

meeting of the physical needs of the person. The result was that they acted upon the resultant coming to Christ by calling upon continued change to the betterment of the whole of humankind. Marty also espouses the idea that:

Today Christianity is the power which is moulding the destinies of the world. The Christian nations are in the ascendant. Just in proportion to the purity of Christianity as it exists in the various nations of Christendom is the influence they are exerting upon the world's destiny...<sup>20</sup>

The Evangelical Protestant Church of North America became a force to be reckoned with in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With changes occurring in industry, transportation and communications the influence of the church upon the country politically became apparent as well. Mark Noll, Christian Historian, writes,

Christian efforts in politics were not as sharply focused as efforts at moral reform. Nevertheless, the period between the Civil War and World War I saw also in politics a high tide of Protestant influence... political leaders of this period saw their public service as a generally Christian enterprise.<sup>21</sup>

As the culture changed with the influence of politics and unpopular war, the face of how church functioned and how it was perceived by society began to change. There was more of an acceptance of diversity. With the emergence of non-denominational churches, people began to look for a way to express their spirituality without being connected to a denomination. Often this phenomenon was influenced by political opinion: the Civil Rights Movement; the Sexual Revolution; Viet Nam; Women's Liberation; and the several "alternative" religions that began to be expressed more openly. Traditional church was being challenged but not being rejected.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid,121.

<sup>21</sup> Mark A. Knoll. *A History of Christianity In the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992, 299.



Sydney E. Ahlstrom, noted religious historian and author of several books, states,

The most widely publicized aspect of the decade's religious history was the emergence of a radical movement in theology which betokened (even if it did not cause) a major reappraisal of the most assured grounds of historic Judaeo-Christian consensus...Equally provocative were the works of three or four rather diverse thinkers who either proclaimed the "death of God," or insisted on an entirely "secular" interpretation of the gospel....<sup>22</sup>

In Chapter One, the author of this dissertation spoke of a moral relativism that seemed to be taking hold not only in the secular thought, but also within the churches of America, in large cities and in places like rural Harney County, Oregon. Ahlstrom goes on to say that,

An equally significant shift could be noted in both ethical theory and actual behavior. Not only did the mass media devote much time and space to a "new morality," but even in doing so they often exploited a new permissiveness by dealing frankly with long-forbidden subjects. In schools, colleges, and universities, this "moral revolutions" first took the form of opposition to the traditional doctrine.<sup>23</sup>

The term "Seekers" designates the generations in America between the sixties and seventies who composed a third of the total population. The seekers were persons looking for something, but were indeed spiritual seekers. They were persons who grew up in church and who had begun to return to church. But in their returning they looked for non-institutional, non-denominational groups within which to worship. The history of the mid-twentieth century, and into the twenty-first century, looked a whole lot different from the churches in which the seeker was raised. The most evident historical change in the church and its emphasis upon moral influence over the centuries has been in the church sponsored public schools. However, into the twentieth-century there have been

---

<sup>22</sup> Sydney E. Ahlstrom. *A Religious History Of The American People*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, 1082.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 1084.

subtle changes in the way the church has carried out its offering of education to the children of the communities of America. Dr. Ronald E. Manahan, the President of Grace College and Theological Seminary believes that,

There is debate within the scholarly community about what motivated those promoting the common schools in the first half of the 1800s. However, there is little doubt that these schools were officially non-sectarian and intended for children of the entire community. Thus began the slow journey of religion toward marginalization in the common schools.<sup>24</sup>

The influence of the Christian community by the church sponsored “public” schools diminished into the twentieth century, causing a once vital part of moral influence to depart from the daily life of the child and ultimately the family. The church at large, including protestant and catholic, responded by spending more effort and money on the creation of community based Christian schools that became intended for the children in its congregations. The Church did this while continuing to offer the Christian education option to the community at large. Manahan again states,

For a variety of reasons hundreds of Christian K-12 schools were founded. Some were developed as reactions to single or multiple traits of public schools. Christian schools were formed because of the public school's perceived failures regarding prayer and Bible reading, creation, American freedoms, sex education, enforcement of a high moral code, high standards and expectations, more individualized instruction, inclusion of parents in the educational processes, etc. Educational rationale has been developed and marketed for each of these varied responses.<sup>25</sup>

Private Christian schools have not insured strong moral influence for the congregation, nor for the community at large; yet have they been vital instruments in a continuing place for the family to hedge against an education which has been guaranteed

---

<sup>24</sup> Dr. Ronald E. Manahan. “The Church and Education in the Twentieth Century” <http://www.ifca.org/voice/99Nov-Dec/manahan.htm>. (accessed on December 9, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

by new laws to prevent the honest representation of the message of Christianity. One of the problems that occur in Christian schools dates back to the colonial days. Educators in Universities such as Yale and Harvard became enamored with intellect and left behind the purpose of Christian education. “Rather than celebrate mysteries, religious scholars often seek to create a belief system that is internally consistent...they begin to prune and revise and redefine.”<sup>26</sup> And while liberal thought does not in and of itself guarantee immorality, it does tend to place more of a focus upon the rights of secular beings; and less of a focus upon the standard of morality and a relationship with Jesus Christ. “It may be that secularization ensues whenever religion is placed within a formal academic setting, for scholars seem unable to resist attempting to clear up all logical ambiguities.”<sup>27</sup>

There have been people in American educational history who have admired the results of the Christian school system. They have recognized the effect of the teaching upon the character and moral standard instilled in the student, and the influence of the standard upon the community. C.O. Brown, an educator in Iowa in the mid eighteenth hundreds, wrote:

Americans are justly proud of their public school system. It was planted by the fathers side by side with the church. It has grown to mighty proportions and produced the noblest results. It has been the nursery of good morals the inspiration of patriotism, the cause of wise and intelligent citizenship and the bulwark of liberty. We are jealous of its good name; we shall plan for its grander future, and shall be no longer silent when it is assailed...<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Roger Finke and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America 1776-1990*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 45.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> C. O. Brown, *The Public Schools and Their Foes* (Dubuque, 1890).

Education for the children of Christians and non-Christians alike is a major concern for most parents. In Britain and America there has long been schools operated solely by the church and offered to all children. In history, the concern over the kind of morality taught in the school was not a concern. Research that is more current provides information that indicates that even though parents may send their children to a “Christian” school for a variety of reasons, they will expect a certain amount of religious education. However, in today’s politically correct society even professors of Christianity want to be sure whose morality is being taught, and in some cases Scriptural morality is resisted by the teacher as well as the parent of the student.

From the standpoint of Christian thought, one would think that the wisest teachings toward moral living would be universally accepted if it came directly from writings of wisdom. Dr. William P. Brown, an Old Testament Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, states:

It is within the anthropocentric framework of the self as moral agent that one can begin to talk about ancient Israelite wisdom in relation to the idea of character, a subject of much study among modern ethicists and literary critics. The appeal of suggesting character formation as the central framework and goal of biblical wisdom lies in the literature’s focus on the developing self in relation to the perceived world, thus bridging the gulf between the anthropocentric and theocentric frames of reference that run throughout the wisdom corpus.<sup>29</sup>

While the above quoted author will support throughout his book the value of wisdom literature of Holy Scripture, he will find his detractors in academia as to what wisdom source should be used to educate children, and whether or not morality should have a universal standard by which it should be taught. Dr Bernadette O’Keeffe, a professor at the University of Cambridge, UK, is a religious studies professor. She writes:

---

<sup>29</sup> William P. Brown. *Character in Crisis*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 4.

Reflecting the wider society, religion no longer provides the source of value-consensus in our educational system. The dominant philosophies of education owe little, if anything, to a Christian world view of the nature and destiny of the individual. The dominant educational model, it would appear, is the property of experts and experts operating from secular assumptions. Reflecting the concerns of Christians and the shift away from any kind of Christian consensus, Cooling and Oliver (1989) observe that pupils: are given fewer and fewer points of spiritual contact and possibilities of Christian understanding at school. Many of our schools, especially secondary schools, do not even offer the possibility of serious encounter with the ideas and beliefs of Christianity as a vigorous, modern and relevant world view.<sup>30</sup>

The author of the above quote, however, goes on to give voice to the Christian education system by stating,

Thus, the Christian Schools Movement has sought to provide a structure within which the group's world view is plausible. A sound plausibility structure allows the meaning system to be held as a common, taken-for-granted entity. Likewise, it has the potential to strengthen the beliefs of individuals, to provide mutual protection of their view of reality and to give the necessary social support. Serving this purpose are locally-sponsored new Christian schools exhibiting a high level of group commitment and consensus. In this context, primary group relationships provide a structure within which the believers' distinctive world view is plausible, whereas outside the group that world is disconfirmed.<sup>31</sup>

To this point in the dissertation the author has been able to provide information that gives understanding to the reader of the religious/social structure passed down through the ages. Christian history and thought has helped to draw some conclusions concerning the moral and ethical influence of the Christian faith. The examples of multiple church organizations show the establishment of a concerted effort by those mentioned toward a Christian ethical and moral influence upon the non-Christian.

---

<sup>30</sup> Bernadette O'Keeffe, "Chapter 6 A Look at the Christian Schools Movement," in *Priorities in Religious Education: A Model for the 1990s and Beyond*, ed. Brenda Watson [book on-line] (London: Falmer Press, 1992, accessed 12 January 2007), 94; available from Questia, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=109120716>; Internet.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

The author has given a brief and relevant coverage of key elements of the Church History insomuch as it has to show the various events and practice across the years in America toward a consistent effort by the Church to provide moral and ethical guidance. The guidance has come from individual and congregational practice of Christianity, from political leaders in America who were dedicated to the founding principles of religious freedom without eliminating the source of Christian thought. The author has also used examples of cultural change within the generational changes of the young people of the nation and in the churches. Those changes have been labeled Postmodern; post Christendom, and Emerging Church, All of which were to show an ongoing desire to be Christ-like and evident models of what Christian ethic and moral values are.

### **Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century Church Moral Influence**

For the sake of obvious clarification, this refers to the history of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century church history. It may be more appropriate to refer to the account as being the cultural change rather than history because we are living in the history being made from the two most recent centuries.

In the realm of Christian Universities, it has become popular to refer to the many varied generational changes in culture and the relevance that religion has to the new and future generations. During the latter years of the twentieth century there have been religious generational references made to the movement from the “modern” to the “postmodern” generation.

Rowland Croucher, an Australian citizen who is a pastor, teacher and religious subject blogger gives the following definitions of “Modernism and Postmodernism” that

the author of this dissertation most closely accepts as the meaning he refers to when using each term.

Modernity is the intellectual and cultural heritage of the Enlightenment project, namely the rejection of traditional and religious sources of authority in favour of reason and knowledge as the road to human emancipation... Postmodernity refers to the progressive loss of confidence in the enlightenment project since 1945, which accelerated in the seventies and eighties as the consequences of modernization became more apparent...<sup>32</sup>

It is because of the above definition that the author has included these two era labels as a part of the Church History portion of the dissertation. The author believes that cultural change in thought is relevant to the changes that have taken place in the church; changes that have brought about concern for the need of the Christian faith community to accept the challenge to renew the obligation of the Christian to become a strong ethical and moral influence in the twenty-first century and forward.

The concern of the church is to how the leadership of the church should respond to the youth of the church. Postmodernity seems to be the most recognizable for most ministry leaders to deal with when identifying the generational group that we work with today. If that is true, then there needs to be a definition of what postmodernism is, inasmuch as we use it to label a historical period in the church. However, not all theologians and philosophers agree that we are still ministering to the postmodern person in or out of the church. Victor Shepherd, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada, addresses the issue of postmodernism from a historical point of view.

---

<sup>32</sup> <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/1669.htm>, Modernity and Postmodernity, By Rowland Croucher and others. May 30, 2003. (accessed May 20, 2011).

What is postmodernism or postmodernity? Plainly we have to know what is meant by "modernity" before we can grasp "*postmodernity*." Some people maintain that modernity begins with the French Revolution with its explicitly secularist, anti-religious outlook. Others date modernity from the Enlightenment with its development of science. Others still (here I include myself) date modernity from the Renaissance with, among other things, the rise of market-capitalism, the development of transnational banking, the nation-state. Modernity, then, runs from mid 15<sup>th</sup> century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century or from 1450 to 1945.<sup>33</sup>

Paul Connelly, a scientific research writer for Dawnstar Advanced Research Collaborative, has created a chart of time lines for historical eras. According to that chart the Modern era ended between 1945 CE and 1948 CE, and the postmodern era began in 1948 CE.<sup>34</sup>

The "postmodern" title represents the grandparents, parents and future parents of the children and youth that this dissertation proposes will be the key moral influence upon the world for ages to come. Stanley Grenz, deceased theologian and pastor who has participated in both the Doctrine Commission and the Theological Education Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, was a consulting editor of *Christianity Today*, and sat on the advisory boards of several publishing companies and Christian organizations, and served as a visiting professor at Geog Fox Evangelical Seminary. He wrote,

Postmodernism affirms that whatever we accept as truth and even the way we envision truth are dependent on the community in which we participate . . . There is no absolute truth: rather truth is relative to the community in which we participate.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.victorshepherd.on.ca/Other%20Writings/postmode.htm>, an address by Victor Shepherd delivered at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, June 23, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.darc.org/connelly/religion5.html> Paul Connelly Admin Organization: Dawnstar Research Collaborative, copyright 2008. (accessed, April 15, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Grenz, S. J., *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 8.



Grandparent and parents are the community and the influential cause of the decline of the moral influence of the church, if they have been proponents of the no absolute truth premise. The author of this dissertation makes the claim that the Christian leader and church has an obligation to make clear what is absolute in Scripture and apply the absolutes of Christian living as an influence upon the non-Christian. Dean Geuras, professor in the Department of Philosophy at Southwest Texas State University believes,

“...it is not benign, but that, even if Christians make no attempt to refute it, it will destroy itself, and possibly its antireligious philosophical predecessors such as Sartrean existentialism, logical positivism, and Wittgensteinianism ...and, as Christians, might now ask, "Why is this so bad?" Postmodernism allows us a truth, so Christians can acknowledge it against the atheistic and agnostic concepts of truth so prevalent in among scholars today. Does not postmodernism promise to preserve our intellectual freedom that was threatened by more antagonistic movements such as logical positivism, behaviorism, Marxism, and atheistic existentialism?<sup>36</sup>

The postmodern age has also been referred to as post-Christendom. If the time we have lived in and will live in is post-Christendom, “The culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within a society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence,”<sup>37</sup> then it seems to suggest that something has changed beyond a philosophical way of living. This also indicates the making of a religious, and more importantly Christian, history that could result in a more Christ-less society.

Religious researcher and writer, Stuart Murray writes,

The term ‘post-Christendom’ has become increasing familiar in conversations about church and mission in contemporary western societies. Some first

---

<sup>36</sup>, Richard Rorty the Postmodern Rejection of Absolute Truth  
<http://www.leaderu.com/aip/docs/geuras.html>. (accessed April 19, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

encountered this term in the ‘After Christendom’ series published by Paternoster and written by members of the Anabaptist Network since 2004...different people use the term...in different ways.<sup>38</sup>

The author of this dissertation agrees with Stuart Murray that Post-Christendom, as used in this dissertation, is not a statement that the period is not a culture that is not Christian. Murray writes,

Post-Christendom does not comprehensively describe the culture that will replace Christendom...does not mean post-Christian...The demise of Christendom does mean the Christian story is becoming unfamiliar.<sup>39</sup>

While the Christian society of the twenty-first century may recoil at the mention of postmodernism, it may be surprised at the young seeker who rejects the call to abandon the old morality. Robert C. Greer, Ph. D. in Systematic Theology, Marquette University, who has served as a church pastor and a missionary, he writes,

...rather than embracing the new morality and the new social mores, these people have become the new counterculture. Like Old Testament prophets, they are foretelling an impending doom upon Western culture unless it turns back, repents from its dalliance with postmodernism and once again affirms the existence of absolute truth.<sup>40</sup>

Future history and a close examination of how church exists now, will reveal that the church is still in the business of influencing the community at large. In each ensuing generation, the church as history has already shown that given the call upon one’s life in

---

<sup>38</sup> Stuart Murray, Post-Christendom, Post-Christian...does the label matter? <http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/book/export/html/506>, (accessed April 18, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> Stuart Murray. *Post-Christendom*, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks, UK and Waynesboro, GA.: Paternoster Press, 2005, 1, 4, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Robert C. Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism; a Survey of Christian Options*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003, 13-14, quoting Allen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p.25.

service to God, Christians will influence. There are postmodern Christians who have found a way to present moral influence. Robert Greer adds to the above quote that,

When absolute truth is understood as personal and animate, changes also occur in how the unsaved are identified and evangelized...the multiple portraits of Christ generated from the paradigm shift...people within the church that others do not consider genuine believers in Christ may, in fact, be believers.<sup>41</sup>

Just as it has been difficult from one previous “modern” generation to the next to recognize the genuineness of its new generation, history in the making is able to show that the church will look different and sound different while continuing to do the influencing. Research and documented events in the twentieth century show that this phenomenon is occurring. According to Stuart Murray, who makes the following observation,

Post- Christendom suggests we are experiencing cultural turbulence as the long era of Christendom comes to an end. It argues that to negotiate this we need to understand Christendom, why it is collapsing and how we reconfigure discipleship, mission and church for a new era.<sup>42</sup>

Murray’s writing is important to the Christian faith in that he has addressed the changes that have taken place not only in Europe but in the church worldwide. According to Dr. Nigel G. Wright, Principle of Spurgeon’s College, he states that Murray is, “a tried and trusted scholar and commentator whose insights and gifts are recognized across the world.”<sup>43</sup>

The church as the first source of Christian moral influence for its members has declined. And attendance in church has declined because the attraction of the church has

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 196.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart Murray. *Post-Christendom*, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 2004 &2005, xv.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, xii.

gone away, and people have sought other venues for family activity. Research shows significant historical decline in both in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Callum Brown, Professor of religious and cultural history at the University of Dundee in Scotland is cited by Murray as saying,

In unprecedented numbers, the British people since the 1960s have stopped going to church...have neglected to baptize their children. Meanwhile, their children, the two generations who grew to maturity in the last thirty years of the twentieth century, stopped going to Sunday school, stopped entering confirmation or communicant classes, and rarely, if ever, stepped inside a church to worship in their entire lives.<sup>44</sup>

The ability of the church to be morally influential beyond the church walls must begin with the ability of the individual church leadership to ensure Scriptural moral standards are taught to the adult as well as the youth. It is paramount that Spiritual formation within the person exists in the church to assure that the church will maintain and establish strength of character outside the church. William P. Brown, Old Testament Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, states:

Moral rules, consequently, cannot operate independently of the formation of the character in traditions transmitted and shaped by the community. Rather, principles and rules are part and parcel of the dynamics of character formation in that they contribute to the community's task of providing particular conceptions of the good through which character is formed.<sup>45</sup>

In the closing years of the twentieth century, and on into the twenty-first century, there have been approaches by some church organizations to become relevant within the community as well as the world. The attempts to become relevant have come through the

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 5 quoted Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

<sup>45</sup> William P. Brown. *Character in Crisis*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996, 14.

establishment of small groups that act as recovery groups that do not require spiritual change. It is not the intent of the author of this dissertation to imply that those groups are negative toward the eventual influence of the Christian upon the non-Christian. At New Hope Community Church, a contemporary American example of a large church, in Portland, Oregon, the recovery groups have been the path to spiritual recovery as well.<sup>46</sup> Some church leaders have developed programs to teach the church body how to disciple and become moral influencers at the same time. They offer seminars and implement church small groups that service a variety of human maladies. Many of the offerings in the form of small groups have been recovery and special focus groups (i.e. substance abuse; recovery to MOPS, moms of pre-school children). The street corner preacher and the annual revival meeting still exist as a way to reach and influence the community, but is generally attended or listened to by persons who are already a part of the church.

Bill Hybels of the Willow Creek Church in Chicago, also an example of the contemporary American large church, was an early pioneer in the late twentieth century in finding ways to become a Christian influence to the un-churched. In one of his instructional books to lay persons he states,

The 'Becoming a Contagious Christian' evangelism course is designed to help everyday Christians – like you and me – to confidently and effectively spread their faith to people they know. The emphasis is on natural approaches that work over time to bring family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors to the point of trusting in Christ.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Not all small group establishment is negative. New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon provides an abundance of Spiritual Formation and Scripture study small groups.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Mittleberg, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels. *Becoming a "Contagious Christian, Participant's Guide*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995, 4.

In that same book there is a chart that each trainee lay person must use in order to remain organized, and to develop a solid style of their personal influence upon people that they want to “impact” for Christ. In fact, the chart is called the “Impact List.” The list requires the person to record the names of people that they are influencing, the readiness level (of the person to accept Christ), areas of common ground, conversational transitions and relational contacts, as well as conversations about spirituality.<sup>48</sup> Hybels’ team believes that the attempts to influence for Christ must be genuine and purposeful. They accomplish the goal by leading the participant through their own spiritual conversion to include how they were influenced.<sup>49</sup>

Another effective effort in twentieth century church history toward developing churches that last and grow spiritually is the “Natural Church Development” process. This book, and accompanying handbook, teaches churches how to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their church, and how to “turn barriers into opportunities.”<sup>50</sup> At first glance this may seem like a business-marketing plan. The underlying reason for any church to use the “Natural Church Development” method would be for the obvious goal of building a church. However, the ultimate goal is to teach church how to become healthy influencers of the communities within which they live, in order to win souls for Christ. To that end, the method teaches the leadership and the congregations to bring Christians to the place of, “Every Christian serving at the place where God has him or her

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, throughout the workbook, each chapter leads the person being trained, to make purposeful practice and application in order win souls and influence future influencers.

<sup>50</sup> Christian A. Schwarz, and Christopher Schalk. *Natural Church Development*, St. Charles, Illinois: Church Smart Resources, 1998, front cover.

to be,<sup>51</sup> and to “...identify those Christians to whom God has given the gift of evangelism.”<sup>52</sup> The two aforementioned methods of training are typical of many church efforts in America now in the twenty-first century, and in the recent twentieth century church.

The church in the nineteen hundreds and into the new millennium has often become non-denominational in that they look like the mainline churches. They preach the same gospel yet they fly under the banner of “community church” or “worship center” or “Christian center.” Because of binding polity, many denominational congregations have felt restrained in their ability to influence the world because of the policies about handling those who are divorced, sex offenders, criminals of other convictions, and those who refuse to bend to the rules of denominational conformity.

Donald E. Messer is a United Methodist theologian and author of twelve books. Currently the Executive Director of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS, Messer was President of Dakota Wesleyan University from 1971-1981 and President of Illiff School of Theology from 1981-2000. He writes,

The ministry of the practical theologian cannot be understood apart from participation in the life of the church in the world. Conceivably the systematic or historical theologian might function only in academia, treating the community of faith primarily from the standpoint of either sociological distance or scholarly disinterest. But practical theologians are rooted in the praxis or action of the church and reflect upon that praxis in the light of the normative standards of faith.

Obviously, participants are related to distinct, concrete historical congregational realities, this includes a denominational affiliation since that is the predominant patten of global church life. Even the most ecumenically minded still operate from

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, 56.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 58.

a denominational foundation...denominations represent “the moral failure of Christianity.”<sup>53</sup>

Dr. Messer continues,

Denominationalism requires that worship, unless taking place in the jungles of a mission, take place in a building or a temple. Yet, the seeker of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may not have a church building or the seeker may not want to come to a “church” building. Beyond that, it may be that in order to reach the seeker the influence of a pastor may be too theological in speech. Practical theologians emphasize orthopraxy more than orthodoxy. Doctrine arises more from discipleship than from deductive processes. “God-walk rather than God-talk” is the way Frederick Herzog characterizes this new way of forming and teaching Christian doctrine.<sup>54</sup>

The historical church still has its place in the Christian world inasmuch as it provides worship to the denominationally astute worshiper. However in the need to be contextual influencers of morality from the stand point of Christianity, the church must be flexible and create new history.

Although some of the “new morality,”<sup>55</sup> (a term used by Dr. Henry Morris, deceased, a Christian apologist and founder of the Creation Research Society) that is accepted by the world can never be accepted as Christian morality, it is a phenomenon that must be dealt with. A significant part of the American Church history from the 1960s into the new millennium has given the church a challenge. There are detractors of the morals of the “old time religion,” and even though the moral climate of the sixties seemed new and freeing, they are not issues that were left un-dealt with by the church in pre 1960’s Christianity.

---

<sup>53</sup> Donald E. Messer. *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1989, 157,160.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 161.

<sup>55</sup> Excerpt from *The Bible Has the Answer*, by Henry Morris and Martin Clark, published by Master Books, 1987. <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-f001.html>, (accessed May 21, 2011).



There are scholars who want to be able to somehow re-interpret parts of Scripture concerning morality. This has been referred to as “A Silent Revolution.”<sup>56</sup> “This revolution has radically altered the formation and operation of personal value systems.”<sup>57</sup> Dr. Frank Moore, former professor at Olivet Nazarene University currently serves as Vice President of Academic Affairs for MidAmerican Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas, writes,

The 1960s brought the sexual revolution, situation ethics, the counterculture movement, and a host of other influences that called the Judeo-Christian tradition into question... This means that most conduct condemned as immoral 30 years ago is now tolerated as “alternate lifestyles.” The general public no longer frowns on unmarried couples living together, unwed motherhood, or practice of homosexuality.<sup>58</sup>

Whether we label what is taking place in the world today as postmodern, emerging or revolutionary, there is a difference in the way the populations identifies with society and to which group it will belong. There seems to be confusion in churches as to what family values are, and if it matters what we say they should be. It seems as though there is a standard for each church, and a standard for the media depending upon the personal values of the individual. It is because of this that there must be a stronger more intensive effort by the leadership of the churches to provide a recognizable Christian moral influence.

---

<sup>56</sup> Frank Moore. *Dismantling The Myths, realigning Moral Choices With Faith*, Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997, 82.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 82, 84.

## Summary

The history of the moral influence by the church upon the communities at large is being written as we figure out how to strengthen our grip upon the families of the church without losing the identity of being Christian. "...in our time the young gather most of their values elsewhere, most commonly from peers and the cinematic and video fantasies with which their inner world is randomly festooned."<sup>59</sup>

The historical Protestant and Catholic Church in America cannot stand up under the lack of conviction that causes one to be unable to function in the functional established denominations. That promotes a "Shame that Binds,"<sup>60</sup> a clinical term used by John Bradshaw, a theologian and author. The Church, properly led, can be the Christian ethical and moral influence if it is able to move beyond a shame placed upon it by non-Christian entities and unethical and immoral behavior by nominal Christians. Nominal Christians are those who profess, but do not live out the scriptural instruction for moral and ethical living given to the Christian.

The history of the moral influence of the church in the twenty-first century is shaping up to show a generation of young people more concerned about what they have than how they get it. There is a standard of self-centeredness that seems to play out the prophecy of the loss of real love for one another. Post-modernism does not have to be the enemy of the church nor of the Christian way of life. The leadership of the church,

---

<sup>59</sup> David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland; The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994, 217.

<sup>60</sup> John Bradshaw. *Healing The Shame That Binds You*, Deerfield Beach, Florida: 1988, ix.

however, must be able to recognize the history of the future in the making. David F.

Wells, Professor at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, writes,

The progeny has arisen to take revenge on the fathers and mothers as they lie dead or dying from fraud and old age. These parents were once the celebrated visionaries of the brave new enlightenment world, but now they are worthless. Upon them has fallen the most feared and damning judgment of Our Time: they have been declared passé; they are obsolete... Their faith in the idea of progress proved to be the last Western superstition, and now it has died... Post-modernity is proving to be the unfolding of the final stages in modernity, in which, as it were, the beast, now sickened and deranged, has fallen and begun to consume its own innards.<sup>61</sup>

The history of the church in the last half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century is made up of a group of leaders who at first were concerned about growing. So the growing of the church became more of a focus than the spiritual formation of the people in the church.

It is not indigenous only to the Protestant church that there is a concern for spiritual growth, and a focus upon the moral influence of the church upon the community.

Dr. Leslie Tentler, Professor and Director of The Center for American Catholic Studies at Catholic University of America, states,

Studies of Catholic cultural influence might be set within the context of shifting Catholic personal and social identities in twentieth century America. What is the relationship between the American Catholic subculture and the history of American "manners and morals"? To what degree did Catholic attitudes towards personal morality and public conduct have an impact on the so-called mainstream culture? How did American Catholics' interaction with agents of mainstream ethical and cultural norms affect Catholic sensibilities?<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 216.

<sup>62</sup> Leslie Tentler, "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History," 1993 essay. Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame with support from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. and the University of Notre Dame. <http://www.nd.edu/~cushwa/20thCentury.htm>, (accessed February 1, 2007).

Spiritual formation as a moral influence among the church congregants and the community outside the church has been a part of the church for centuries. The primary focus of spiritual formation has always been to focus upon one's self in terms of the individual's relationship with God. In the postmodern church, and even in the so called emerging church, there is an emphasis upon the self-spirit development. A large part of the twentieth and twenty-first century church encourages a returning to the orthodox way of seeking communion with God. There is a renewing of both spiritual formation and spiritual direction in the church. Both practices have steered a new direction for the individual and have brought about moral influencing in an unintended way. Most Christian seminaries offer complete degree work in spiritual formation and many offer separate certificates in spiritual direction.<sup>63</sup>

Moral influence history of the church in America has been the acceptance of old teaching, i.e. the early American Puritan, through the beginning of the twenty-first century. It was an attempt by the youth movement to return to the more Orthodox roots of Christianity. Somewhere in between church became a comfortable place for people to meet once a week to conduct a formal "worship" service.

It is the role and responsibility of the Christian faith community to shape the history of the Christian church history for the future. The religious organizations of the world are beginning to focus upon their role in America and consequently in the community that the author of this dissertation resides. The National Humanities Center is located in the Research Triangle Park of North Carolina on the campus of the Triangle

---

<sup>63</sup> George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Fuller Seminary, Seattle Pacific University, Northwest Nazarene University, and many others offer Spiritual Formation curriculum for masters and doctorate programs.

Universities Center for Advanced Studies, Inc., a consortium of Duke University, North Carolina State University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An article recently published (2006) on their website indicates that those religions' see a need to promote the belief of each religion,

...hope that the new religions will become as much a part of the American Way a wholly new religious space is being carved out in the American landscape – a space that has little to do with the traditional ethnic divide between black and white or the religious division of Protestant, Catholic and Jew. This religious site is different, too, from the New Age seekers and spiritual shoppers of the boomer generation. Americans are going to be exposed to multiple ethnic and “Two-thirds” world religions as never before. While certain portions of the intellectual elite have been fascinated with the world’s “great religions” (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam) since the mid-nineteenth century, these traditions have never penetrated Main Street America. By the end of this century, however, Americans will increasingly encounter Buddhist neighbors, Muslim colleagues, and Hindu businessmen. These “foreign” religions will no longer be simply descriptions in school textbooks or exotic movie subjects. Indeed advocates of cultural pluralism as historically Protestant Orthodoxy.<sup>64</sup>

The history of the twenty-first century Christian church will look much different than the twentieth century. One of the influences upon the youth of the twenty-first century is the attractive programs of the church, and the variety of choice that the youth have for receiving the gospel. Much is being written about and preached about concerning the “emerging” church. The concern for mainline churches has been that the message has changed. The author of this paper has found that it is less about the message and more about the way the message is being delivered. The moral influence seems to be as strong as ever going all the way back to the Puritan days. John S. Hammett, Professor of Theology, Southeastern Baptist Seminary writes,

All these factors suggest that the premise that we must respond to postmodernism

---

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/trelww2.htm>. (accessed March 13, 2006).

as a necessary condition for reaching the next generation is problematic at best. Of course, churches should not ignore what is going on in the culture around them and should strive to make their message intelligible. Loving our neighbor as ourselves, being all things to all men, and making the message clear are all biblical imperatives (Rom. 13:9; I Cor. 9:22; Col. 4:4), and require taking cognizance of the worldview of those to whom we speak. But this is simply doing what all believers are always called to do; namely, responding to scriptural commands. To insist that all churches must change their methods and message in the light of postmodern culture to reach the next generation seems simply to be an inaccurate overstatement.<sup>65</sup>

The emerging church culture is not a new religion nor is it counterproductive to the mainline church. It is a cultural advance that claims the same gospel that the traditional churches claim. The concern of the author of this paper is that the church finds a way to teach its congregants how to become stronger Christian moral influences upon the non-churched, as well as upon the youth of the churched. The leadership of the emerging church has that in mind. John S. Hammett also writes,

The emerging church website asserts that postmodernism is a real and powerful influence in contemporary culture, and that it is imperative for churches to “learn the vernacular” of the postmodern world, so that they can “speak the gospel within the culture, and minister to postmodern people.”<sup>66</sup>

By learning the “vernacular” of the postmodern Christian person, one who believes to some extent that there are no absolutes, the Christian faith community will be able to remain a Christian moral influence for the churched and the un-churched. If the mainline church and the persons that are being trained to become ministry workers do not acknowledge the viability of the postmodern emerging church we will lose our influence.

---

<sup>65</sup> John S. Hammett, Professor of Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, “An Ecclesiological Assessment of the Emerging Church Movement,” <http://ateam.blogware.com/AnEcclesiologicalAssessment.Hammett.pdf>. (accessed April 8, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

George Barna founded the Barna Research Group (now The Barna Group). He has been hailed as "the most quoted person in the Christian Church today."

The findings of George Barna that young adults ages eighteen to thirty-two are those least likely to describe themselves as committed Christians and that church attendance is declining by generation, with church attendance of teenagers living independent of their parents lower than at any time in the past twenty years. He challenges church leaders to survey their areas and see who isn't attending church. He believes they will find a "dramatically decreasing percentage of people in emerging generations" involved in local congregations<sup>67</sup>

One of the most significant occurrences in the "emergent church" is that its own effort toward moral influence has not been strong. The Emergent Church is a Christian movement of the late twentieth and early twenty first century that crosses a number of theological boundaries: participants can be described as evangelical, protestant, roman catholic, post-evangelical, Anabaptist, Adventist, liberal, post-liberal, reformed, charismatic, Neocharismatic, Post-charismatic, Conservative, and Post-Conservative. Proponents, however, believe the movement transcends such "modernist" labels of "conservative" and "liberal."<sup>68</sup>

It seems that the purpose of the movement has been more of an outlet or provision for youth to gather for worship without a supportive outreach to the unsaved. Trevin Wax is a pastor, religious writer and owner of the blog, Kingdom People. He writes,

*The Emerging Church isn't making many converts...What the Emerging Church has succeeded at is reaching young, disgruntled Christians who are fed up with the problems in traditional evangelicalism....Another issue that affects evangelism is the lack of clarity and focus regarding the nature of salvation. With traditional doctrines such as the exclusivity of Jesus Christ and the existence of*

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Emerging+Church>. (accessed, May 20, 2011).

hell being questioned (and, in some quarters, outright denied), evangelism is no longer a priority. *Saved... from what? Saved... by whom?* <sup>69</sup>

The Christian faith community has focused upon world influence rather than upon the influence of the neighborhood. The great preachers of the twentieth century have left their mark for evangelism around the world. The author of this paper has a preference for the use of faith community influence over evangelistic campaigns as a way to reach the non-Christian in the context of local community influence. He also believes that the local preacher, congregation and institutions of Christian education must become the foundations for moral and ethical influence in the communities within which they serve. George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, is a Catholic theologian and one of America's leading public intellectuals. He states that,

...if one believes that the Christian movement bears the truth of the world's story, then John Paul II looms very large indeed. So, of course, do others: Billy Graham, who gave a new dynamism and unprecedented worldwide reach to evangelical Protestantism; Karl Barth, embodiment of the last great effort within the sixteenth-century Reformation traditions to reconstitute Christian orthodoxy apart from Rome or the Christian East. But neither Graham nor Barth became the kind of global moral witness that John Paul II has become. And in that sense (for the Pope insists that his public moral witness is, *semper et ubique*, a function of his Christian faith), neither was the kind of evangelist that John Paul II has been, throughout the worlds-within-worlds of humanity<sup>70</sup>

Churches are able in the twenty-first century to remain relevant moral influences within the community. During telephone interviews with two prominent Portland, Oregon churches I learned that some churches expect the influence to happen once a person walks into the church, hears the sermon and somehow becomes excited enough about the

---

<sup>69</sup> Trevin Wax. copyright © 2008 Kingdom People Blog. <http://trevinwax.com/2008/02/05/5-reasons-why-the-emerging-church-is-now-receding/>. (accessed, April 8, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> George Weigel, John Paul II and The Crisis of Humanism. *First Things First, The Journal of Religion, Culture and Public Life*, [Copyright \(c\) 1999 First Things 98 \(December 1999\): 31-36.](#)



message that they will come back. One particular church in downtown Portland, Oregon has put their mission statement into action through the services of outreach ministries. Dr. Lowell Greathouse, the Pastor of Discipleship, stated that the church actively provides resources for housing, healthcare, food, living wage resources and educational needs for people of the downtown community.<sup>71</sup>

First Baptist Church (FBC) of Portland, Oregon also places great emphasis upon the active moral influencing of the people of its community. In a recent interview with Senior Pastor, Dr. David Wheeler, he referred me to the church website for a detail of the ministry offerings that are vital to the Christian witness and moral influence of the downtown community close to the church.

Every Monday and Thursday between 2-4 p.m., our Drop-In Center Ministry Team serves more than 700 meals a week to the homeless and low-income people of our community. There are also evening programs for street youth (the weekly "Dinner and a Movie" gathering in the Activity Center) FBC distributes food baskets and participates with the Oregon Food Bank and other agencies to fight hunger in the downtown area.<sup>72</sup>

Twenty-first century church history in the making is composed of the traditional and nontraditional church. The concern for active Christian moral influence is apparent. The above references are evidence that it can be done and can be duplicated.

Chapter Three has given a snapshot of the American Church history concerning its concern for the Christian moral and ethical influence by the way each has conducted its

---

<sup>71</sup> Telephone interview, Dr. Lowell Greathouse, pastor of outreach ministries, First United Methodist Church, Portland, Oregon, December 12, 2007, by the author.

<sup>72</sup> Telephone interview with Dr. David Wheeler, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Portland, OR. Novemeber 18, 2007. And church website at, <http://www.fbc-portland.org/Ministries.aspx?ContentID=38>. (accessed November 20,2007).

hermeneutics of the theology of Scripture. The next chapter will address the moral malady that faces the community of Harney County and its towns where the author resides. Examples of other communities in America will show that the malady is not a problem to an isolated area of the country.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PROBLEMS FACING THE MORAL CONDITION OF HARNEY COUNTY

#### **The Problem in Harney County Oregon**

Chapter One provided an introduction to the perceived problem that exists in Harney County Oregon concerning the role and responsibility that should be taken toward the ethical and moral influence by the Christian faith community. The author of this paper stated that,

Most non-church going Americans in fact do not look to any facet of the Christian church as the sole repository of moral knowledge. One recent survey conducted by Barna Group showed that while most Americans consider personal faith to be an important source of moral guidance, “a huge majority of adults pick and choose what they believe rather than adopt a church or denomination’s slate of beliefs.” The church’s waning influence is at least one contributing factor to America’s ever-increasing moral vacuum.

The statement is warranted by the narrative provided in the chapter with conversations that took place over a period of time by the local ministerial association. The outcome, still in process, was a decision of the local pastors to begin to put into place cooperative changes to provide a visible effort to become a more active ethical and moral influence upon the community.

#### **Using Scripture as the Source for Change**

Chapter Two offered scriptural support for the God-given challenge to the Christian church to provide moral and ethical witness in their personal lives, their families and their community. The author gave a primary focus upon Paul’s instruction that, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16 KJV). The idea that the church should use the Scripture as its first source of living godly lives that will exhibit a Christian ethical and moral witness to the non Christian is the underlying message.

### **Learning From Church History**

Chapter Three then provided an overview of the Church history of its ethical and moral influence upon the communities in which they existed. There is evidence of at least cursory, if not strong, effort from the ancient church through early American church history to provide guided instruction toward being a moral witness to the community. The purpose for the inclusion of Church history was to show that there has always been a calling of Christians to respond to the thesis of this paper. The thesis being that the Christian-faith community does have a role and responsibility to remain and to return to being a Christian ethical and moral influence upon the non-believing community.

### **Overview of the Problem in Harney County**

Chapter Four will address the problems facing the moral condition of the community at large. Using local and national data collected through interview and research documents, the current decline of the ethical and moral fiber of the families of the community will be discussed.

In the community of Harney County, Oregon, there are relationship problems with families to parent their children in such a manner as to intervene before traumatic events occur. One way will be to present the values of moral character through character

education principles. Recent developments indicate that the court system and the social service agencies are looking beyond the normal process to treat children in trouble.

The Juvenile Department statistics of Harney County, Oregon show that of 790 cases of their involvement of adjudicated and non-adjudicated youth, 520 are adjudicated for non-personal injury crimes committed during school hours. They are apprehended for graffiti, cutting class, driving without a license, uninsured driving, and use of drugs and alcohol. Further investigation reveals that 251 of the youth are in one-parent homes. Youth leave for school in the morning after the parent has left for work and arrive or should arrive home before the parent returns home at the end of the day. According to one behavioral researcher, Shelley Waters Boots, former director of New America's Early Education Initiative,

Children whose parents work nonstandard schedules are worse off than children whose parents work regular hours. For example, studies confirm that children with parents who work nights or evenings have lower reading and math test scores, and adolescents with parents who work nonstandard hours experience more behavioral problems. Work during nonstandard hours has serious repercussions on another key factor affecting children's development: marriage. When fathers work nights, separation or divorce is about six times higher than for fathers who work standard hours. When mothers work nights, separation or divorce is three times higher. Finally, children often suffer from poor-quality child care. As most parents can attest, finding and paying for high-quality child care is a Herculean task. Unfortunately, more than half of all child care settings have been deemed to be of poor or mediocre quality.<sup>1</sup>

The adjudicated youth, convicted of minor in possession infractions, most often have access to unguarded drugs and alcohol in their homes. Over 200 of the adjudicated

---

<sup>1</sup> Shelley Waters Boots. Beyond Latchkey Kids. <http://www.newamerica.net/node/7707>. (accessed June 15, 2011).

youth live in homes that claim an influence of the church but are not in attendance and are essentially non-participatory church members.<sup>2</sup>

Over a five-year record, there have been six youth suicides in Harney County. Often with indicators of un-treated mental health issues that stem from abuse by a parent, depression, and loss of one or both parents to death, incarceration, suicide or divorce. Leading family experts say that there is strong evidence for reduction of youth at risk where there is faith-based influence by the members of the faith-based organizations.<sup>3</sup>

In Harney County the several churches have come together to support outreach to the families and youth of the community by participating and being financially involved in a group called “Young Life.” Although this organization ministers to the youth of the Christian community locally, it does little to reach out to the rest of the community.

### **How May the Christian Faith Community Influence the Children?**

The question of this dissertation is “what can the faith based organizations, especially the churches and the families of the churches, do to significantly influence the children and families of the community to produce Christian moral and character?” Not just to increase the population of the church, but also lead the members of the community to Jesus Christ through virtuous living that is duplicated in the lives of the community. In addition, can the faith community do that without becoming political, and in such a way that the community members outside the church will be attracted to the promoted change without labeling as political or church meddling with government in society? Larry Nucci

---

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview with Juvenile Court counselor Lori Cheeks, September 20, 2005. Burns, Oregon.

<sup>3</sup> Gary McConeghy Ph.D. Josephine County, Personal interview, 2003.

is Co-Director, with Stacey Horn, of the Office for Studies in Social and Moral Development and Education. He states,

At the heart of the matter is whether we can point to a set of moral values that would form the basis of an "overlapping consensus" that would permit approaches to moral education that appeal to more than local or particularistic values. Without such consensus, the incommensurable qualities of local values would render shared notions of a moral community impossible.<sup>4</sup>

The problem cited in Harney County, Oregon is not an isolated incident. It is a national dilemma and one that the Christian faith community can address with a focus upon the outreaching influence of the Christian moral and character development of our youth. The reports generated by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), although not infallible in representing crime rates, are effective at showing trends and general patterns. The following patterns in juvenile crime have been particularly interesting:

- Between 1987 and 1994 most arrest rates increased sharply. Aggravated assault rates doubled, as did murder rates.
- Since 1994 most arrest rates have been in steady decline. Murder arrest rates, for example, were 74% lower in 2000 than they were in 1993.
- Males drove the 1987-1994 spike in the murder arrest rate, and the increases were seen in acts committed with firearms.
- Drug abuse arrest rates rose steadily through the '90s and have not yet dropped significantly.
- The arrest rate among females did not experience the sharp rise and fall that occurred with males during the '90s. Arrest rates among female offenders, instead, have continued to rise steadily since the 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

The Juvenile Justice system has its own idea of how the juvenile crime behavior problem should be addressed. There remains a need for the Christian community to step

---

<sup>4</sup> Larry Nucci. "Moral Development and Character Formation." *Psychology and Educational Practice*, Berkeley: MacCarchan. P.127-157. 1997.  
<http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/articles/nuccimoraldev.htm> (accessed January 11, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Juvenile Justice FYI, Information On Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Crime Statistics, [http://www.juvenilejusticefyi.com/juvenile\\_crimes.html](http://www.juvenilejusticefyi.com/juvenile_crimes.html) (accessed April 23, 2006).

up to the plate where the opportunity is given. In Harney and Multnomah counties in Oregon, the local ministries are welcomed as a part of the solution. All too often, the opportunity is left to a specialized group of so-called prison ministries. An interview with the Harney County Juvenile Court Judge and the Harney County Assistant District Attorney revealed support for local youth ministry pastors to make calls upon the incarcerated youth at the Eastern Oregon Youth Authority facility.<sup>6</sup> The church has to be able to develop approaches to the community, via relationships that place the influencers in the context of the people that they want to influence, which includes everyone who is not a Christian. However, it is possible to begin without the approach being one of direct evangelizing. Larry Nucci also states,

While there is some controversy over whether the distinction between morality and convention is made by members of all cultural groups, a number of studies have demonstrated that subjects from a wide variety of the world's cultures do differentiate between matters of morality and convention. Evidence in support of the morality/convention distinction has been obtained from subjects in Brazil, India, Israel (Arab and Israeli subjects), Korea, Nigeria, Virgin Islands, and Zambia. Moreover, recent research has demonstrated that something parallel to the distinction between morality and social convention operates within the moral and normative conceptions of religious children and adolescents with respect to their conceptions of religious rules. It has been found (Nucci, 1989) that children and adolescents from observant religious groups (Amish-Mennonite and Orthodox Jews) judged certain religious norms (e.g., day of worship, work on the Sabbath, baptism, circumcision, wearing of head coverings, women leading worship services, premarital sex between consenting adults, keeping Kosher) in conventional terms in that they regarded these as contingent on religious authority or the word of God, and as particular to their religion. In contrast, moral issues (e.g., stealing, hitting, slander) were regarded as prescriptive (wrong to do) independent of the existence of a rule established by religious authority or by God's word, and as obligatory for members of all other religious groups.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Judge William Cramer, Harney District Court, Harney County, Oregon and Harney County Assistant District Attorney, Christie Timko. January, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Larry Nucci. "Moral Development and Character Formation." *Psychology and Educational Practice*, Berkeley: MacCarchan. P.127-157. 1997.  
<http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/articles/nuccimoraldev.htm> (accessed January 11, 2006).



The church, and other faith-based groups, must identify and promote ways of engaging the family that will appeal to lifestyle change that makes sense to the parents who are still raising children. Parents need to be able to recognize the change agent as sensible, intellectual and usable. The church should identify the rules of engagement to the extent that it promotes families of high morals, good character and virtuous living. The change agent must be personal. Kyle D. Pruett, M.D., A Clinical Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine writes that,

In the past, psychologists studying the development of children focused almost exclusively on children's relationships with their mothers. Today, they have come to agree that fathers play a unique and crucial role in nurturing and guiding children's development. Many experts now believe that fathers can be just as nurturing and sensitive with their babies as mothers.<sup>8</sup>

It is not that fathers have a natural bent toward teaching the children, but that they should assume an equal responsibility in doing so especially in the church. The effects of attachment on children are broad and long lasting. For example, one study found that primary school children scored higher on tests of empathy—the ability to see a situation from another person's viewpoint—if they had secure attachments to their fathers during infancy. These children were able to recognize how other children felt and took steps to make them feel better.<sup>9</sup> Moral development is another area where fathers have special influence. How do fathers influence their children's moral development? When fathers share their plans, activities, and interests, their children are better behaved in school.

---

<sup>8</sup> Pruett, Kyle, MD., *The Nurturing Father*, New York: Warner Books, 1987.

<sup>9</sup> H.B. Biller.,., *Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development*, Westport: Auburn, 1993; Biller, H.B. & Trotter, R.J., *The Father Factor*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

When fathers emphasize how behavior can affect other people's feelings, classmates regard their school-aged daughters as very unselfish.

M.L. Hoffman, professor of Clinical Psychology and Development at the University of California at Berkley, believes that boys who felt similar to, admired, and wanted to resemble their fathers scored higher on tests of personal moral judgment, moral values and rule following. However, boys who did not identify strongly with their fathers showed reluctance to accept blame or guilt when they misbehaved. These boys also tended to have problems with self-control and were more aggressive in school.<sup>10</sup>

In Harney County there are significant issues with teenage and young mothers in their twenties who for one reason or another fail to establish an attachment with their children. In an interview with one co-worker who has observed the removal and placement of young children from the biological family, it was discovered that bonding or attachment is key to the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual and motor skill development of children. Colleen Smerski who has many years of experience in the Child Welfare system of the State of Oregon, and is now a mental health therapist at Harney Behavioral Health, says that,

Without significant positive physical contact between child and mother at birth and in the emergent months, attachment seems to be thwarted. One example is of child M., whose mother J., was separated from him in very early infancy gained no bond. Each time the mother would present for a visit in the parent room of DHS in Burns, Oregon the child would wait until the mother would finally give up and return the child to the foster parent.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> M.L Hoffman., 'Father absence and conscience development', *Child Development*, 4, 1975, pp. 400-406; Hoffman, M.L., 'The role of the father in moral internalization', in Lamb (ed.), *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 2nd ed., 1981, pp. 359-378; Mischel, W., 'Father absence and delay of gratification', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 62, 1961, pp 116-124.

<sup>11</sup> Colleen Smerski , Child Welfare Caseworker. Interview December, 2005, DHS offices Burns, Oregon.

There is a sufficient amount of research and firsthand knowledge, based on outcomes of the child development over just a few months, to substantiate the value of the biological parent attaching to the child immediately after birth. Marvin W. Berkowitz, Center for Character & Citizenship Co-Director, College of Education, University of Missouri - St. Louis, writes,

It is a bit tautological to argue that parenting influences the development of a social sense, having already established that the core of a social sense derives from the formation of the attachment bond that is formed with one's primary caretakers. Nevertheless, one can examine which features of parenting affect the development of a secure attachment bond. Unlike other species in which the attachment bond is instinctive and very narrow and triggered by specific physical cues, in humans the attachment bond can form in a variety of ways and result in a broad range of outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

People realize their self worth within and through their "secure attachments." This becomes evident through their positive relationships to others, through their contribution to their community and through the ways in which they develop their potential and find joy in life. Work is a means toward these ends, and it is through work that these forms of meaning are realized. All of this requires strength and self-discipline, which are fostered by the constant support of, and attachment to, those who love and care about you.

Mothers have an instant and constant responsibility to the forming of attachment, so that the attachments made by the child in later life will be of people with a strong Christian moral character. Ellen G. White, a Seventh Day Adventist teacher, now deceased, wrote,

Attachments formed in childhood have often resulted in a very wretched union or in a disgraceful separation. Early connections, if formed without the consent of

---

<sup>12</sup> Marvin W. Berkowitz and John H. Grych, Marquette University, Copy right 1988. <http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/articles/berkowitzfostering.html>, (accessed March 5, 2007).

parents, have seldom proved happy. The young affections should be restrained until the period arrives when sufficient age and experience will make it honorable, and safe to unfetter them. Those who will not be restrained will be in danger of dragging out an unhappy existence. A youth not out of his teens, is a poor judge of the fitness of a person, as young as himself, to be his companion for life.<sup>13</sup>

The mothers in the church and out in the community must be ever vigilant in how they teach character to their children. Without using a word, children are watching and learning unhealthy and irresponsible character traits that they will take to school and out into the streets of the community. In an experiment to observe children observing animal behavior of opening a slide bolted box, the following statement was made by Carl Zimmer Psychologist and a Lecturer at Yale University, where he teaches writing about science and the environment:

The children could see just as easily as the chimps that it was pointless to slide open the bolt or tap on top of the box. Yet, 80 percent did so anyway. "It seemed so spectacular to me," Mr. Lyons said. "It suggested something remarkable was going on." ... We don't appreciate just how automatically we rely on imitation, because usually it serves us so well."<sup>14</sup>

A child who is raised in a religious setting, no matter what the theology, learns to believe that life is lived out in a particular way. And if it isn't consistent the child will seek other models that do not confuse the being. Dr. C. George Boeree is a Professor of Psychology at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania. He states,

In traditional societies (even our own only 50 or 100 years ago), a young man or woman looked up to his or her parents, relations, neighbors, and teachers. They were decent, hard-working people (most of them) and we wanted to be just like them... Unfortunately, most children today look to the mass media, especially T.V., for role models. It is easy to understand why: The people on T.V. are

---

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White. An Appeal To Mothers, 1864, <http://www.ellenwhite.org/appeal.htm>, (accessed, February 11, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Carl Zimmer., *Children Learn by Monkey See Monkey Do*, New York: New York Times, December 13, 2005. Science Essays.

prettier, richer, smarter, wittier, healthier, and happier than anybody in our own neighborhoods!<sup>15</sup>

Secular social scientists have offered a great deal to the Christian if they can accept the truth given in the theory of the study and research. Social scientists give much good advice to the society at large but in terms of insight, the Christian parent can glean important developmental skill by reading selectively. One does not need to become an expert at Virtue Philosophy to be able to impart character development that espouses the foundations of virtue. A quote by Laura and Malcolm Gauld of Charles Reade implies that the influence of a parent upon a child lasts a lifetime: “Sow an Act and you reap a Habit; Sow a Habit and you Reap a Character; Sow a Character and you Reap a Destiny.”<sup>16</sup>

The above quote suggests that parents who influence must be fearless and up to the challenge of not allowing the “mindset that everybody else is doing it” to weaken their resolve to raise children who will themselves become influencers of the community. In the pages of an excellent parenting book, I have found in the table of contents an excellent list of what it takes to rear children of Godly influence. The author suggests that every family is a culture within a culture and that as a sub culture there will be a set of values. Tim Stafford, senior writer for Christianity Today magazine writes, “Core

---

<sup>15</sup> Dr. C George Boeree. “Personality Theories, Erik Erikson” Accessed January 16, 2006. Erikson also had some things to say about the interaction of generations, which he called **mutuality**. Freud had made it abundantly clear that a child's parents influence his or her development dramatically. Erikson pointed out that children influence their parents' development as well. The arrival of children, for example, into a couple's life, changes that life considerably, and moves the new parents along their developmental paths. It is even appropriate to add a third (and in some cases, a fourth) generation to the picture: Many of us have been influenced by our grandparents, and they by us. <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/erikson.htm> (accessed March 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Laura and Malcolm Gauld. *The Biggest Job We'll Ever Have; the Hyde School program for character – based education and parenting*, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Singapore: 2002, 227.

Values” that drive the destiny of the individual and the family. It also suggests that parents teach their children how to develop “...a sense of self.”<sup>17</sup>

The Christian faith community, in its effort to influence the moral character of the children and families of the community, must be able to not mind looking different than the world. This may mean that we must be willing to be different while influencing the community contextually in order to reach them for Christ. Tom Sine (Ph.D., University of Washington) is a futurologist who consults with Christian organizations around the world. He has taught at Fuller Theological Seminary and the University of Washington. He relates in his book that, “Reinventing Christian Life and Community for a New Millennium.”<sup>18</sup> While doing the reinventing, the Church must be contextual without losing its “self.”

The role of the parents in the Christian faith community cannot afford to get caught up in entertaining programs that do not reflect the person of Jesus Christ. Merrill, David, a student at Trinity College, wrote the following for his senior year paper:

Humans have been created by God to have a very strong desire to be loved and accepted. Often this desire can lead people to search for love and acceptance from society, and sometimes this desire can lead people to God. When the Church seeks to gain acceptance from the world, by trying to mirror it, the Church turns its head away from God and onto itself.<sup>19</sup>

The author of this dissertation noticed in my work as a social services specialist with the State of Oregon, and as a pastor to several churches, that there seems to be a

---

<sup>17</sup> Tim Stafford. *Never Mind The Joneses*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Tom Sine, *Mustard Seed Versus McWorld; Reinventing Life and Faith for the Future*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999, 193-240.

<sup>19</sup> Merrill, David. (2003). *The Uncool Church: Reaching out to the Rejected of our Society*. URL:<http://www.tiu.edu/cm/seniors03/merrill.pdf>. Copyright 2003 TIU/Trinity College Christian Ministries Dept. James W. Mohler, Ph.D.(accessed, April 22, 2006).

watered down and distorted view of children. Although the state child welfare department waves a banner of safety and permanency for all Oregon children, and the churches promote numerous programs to increase the population of the church children, they seem to get the short end of the stick in being considered as an economic burden. Dr. Bruce Goldberg, DHS Director for the State of Oregon stated,

As you know, the department is facing a \$172 million projected deficit for this biennium. That deficit is based on a number of factors. Increasing caseload, primarily on the Oregon Health Plan, is the largest factor. Cuts in federal match funds and revenue shifts and shortfalls in the 2003-05 biennium that were not included our 2005-07 budget are the other major factors...<sup>20</sup>

Many people, including secular agencies and religious organizations, are expressing alarm and concern for our children in the twenty-first century inasmuch as we believe that our children must receive a greater assurance of love and affection, good role models, purpose and safety in their homes, schools and churches. We want to be assured ourselves that our children will grow up to present as good citizens of the earth in their expression of compassion and service to others. The Census Bureau of the United States provides the following statistics,

Real median household income remained unchanged between 2003 and 2004 at \$44,389, according to a report released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. Meanwhile, the nation's official poverty rate rose from 12.5 percent in 2003 to 12.7 percent in 2004. The percentage of the nation's population without health insurance coverage remained stable, at 15.7 percent in 2004. The number of people with health insurance increased by 2.0 million to 245.3 million between 2003 and 2004, and the number without such coverage rose by 800,000 to 45.8 million.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Bruce Goldberg, DHS Director January 6, 2006 DHS Director's Message. <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/news/messages/message.shtml>, (accessed January 7, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Census Bureau News, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington D.C. [http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income\\_wealth/005647.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html). (accessed January 7, 2006).

The American public voices concern while they continue to allow a society that spends money on everything else except the family and children. There are many programs upon which money is spent within both government and the church, however our money allocation actions seem to say that children and families are less important than new buildings, parks and highways. It is at this level that the Christian faith community can work with government to influence the directing of public funds toward the improvement of the raising of our children without being in opposition to the state.

In relation to families being unable to parent in a way that promotes prevention of and intervention before traumatic events (i.e. suicide, drugs and violence), these can have destructive ramifications on the family unit. Historically, there has been a strong influence by the churches in America upon the families in the community. However, that influence has waned during the last ten years of the twentieth century, and continues to decline in the new millennium. The two major, and dichotomous, influences upon youth in American communities are the strong athletic teams, and the draw to the immediate, but short lived, comfort derived from the use of methamphetamine, alcohol and marijuana.

In one community, the Juvenile Department maintains a small staff and a few full time persons; a director, one or two probation officers and an office administrator. In Harney County, Oregon where there is an active juvenile court maintained by a director, probation officer and one clerical staff. Their workload is equal to that of the Adult Community Corrections Department, per capita, of the adult to juvenile ratio. In the five years from 1998 to 2002 in that Oregon county, Harney, there was an average of 250 youths referred for assault; three for homicide, fifty for arson related crime, two hundred



eleven for burglary (many repeat offenders), two hundred theft referrals, fifteen armed robberies (repeat offenders), two hundred twenty-one weapons possession referrals, thirty sex offense referrals and twenty-five referred for various other misdemeanor crimes.<sup>22</sup>

Harney County holds the highest number per capita of youth suicides nationally at 29% higher than the rest of the nation, and the highest number in the State of Oregon at 33.4% per capita.<sup>23</sup> The Harney County youth form strong relationships built around the occult, and cult worship of infamous persons such as Hitler. These associations have resulted in youth suicide packs, formed around occult rituals and in celebration of the violent deaths of, and by, people such as Hitler and Charles Manson. There have been three successful suicidal completions in the past four years, directly related to these associations. The Christian faith community must respond strongly to become a daily influence of the youth and families in our communities. It must begin with the pastors and the church leadership. The problem remains in solving how the Christian faith community can become a lasting ethical and moral influence upon not only the youth of the community but the entire families of the community. The late pastor Ron Mehl of Beaverton Four Square Church in Beaverton, Oregon wrote,

No one can even agree on the ground rules. Our society's standards have been moved off their biblical foundations to rest on the shifting sands of public opinion polls...and as we all know, everyone has a different definition of right and wrong.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Harney County Juvenile Court Probation Officer, interview by John Stauffer, 11 March 2005, Burns, Oregon, conversation.

<sup>23</sup> Oregon Health Division, Department of Human Services, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey: 1999 YRBS, Youth Suicide Results*, Oregon Health Trends Center for Health Statistics, August 2000. Series No. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Ron Mehl, *The Tender Commandments*, Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1998, 27.

The Christian faith community leadership must begin to teach the leadership of the churches how to become ethical and moral influences of the youth and families of our communities that we serve. As a community of Christian churches they need to determine what the role and responsibility of the pastoral leadership is to come together, setting aside hermeneutical differences, in order to become an effective moral and ethical influence to the non-Christian families of the community.

What do families need to succeed in the twenty-first century? How can the Christian faith community influence the youth and families of the community outside the walls of the church? Chapter Five will provide some answers to these questions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HOW IS THE CHURCH TO MODEL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES / VALUES TO A POSTMODERN SOCIETY THAT DOES NOT SHARE THE SAME WORLDVIEW?

It seems that Christians have placed their energy on the challenge of Postmodernity in the late twenty and early twenty-first centuries. Even in doing so, there appears to have been a lack of attention placed upon the disintegration of a nominally Christian population within the Church and less so upon the non-Christian or non-believer.

The author of this dissertation does not believe that because of the moving away from the past strong influence that the Church has had upon families, and to some extent the political world, opportunity is lost. He believes that it provides the new generation of Christians an opportunity to once again present a more biblical approach for God's people to be the ethical and moral influence to the non-Christian. He believes that God's people must continue to be His people in His world.

This chapter will discuss some methods the church family, and families within the church, can put into effect to influence the community. These methods are based on the Apostle Paul's words: "From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:15-16 NIV). Paul leaned heavily upon the Scripture of the Old Testament to place strong emphasis on the sermons that he preached. George Eldon Ladd was a pivotal figure in the resurgence of evangelical scholarship in America during the years after the Second World War. He wrote, "For Paul the Scriptures

are holy and prophetic...and constitutes the very oracles of God ...Several times Paul uses the formula, “the Lord says”...and elsewhere presupposes...The Scripture is the word of God because it is spirit breathed, i.e. inspired (II Tim. 3:16).”<sup>1</sup>

This chapter presents examples of how moral influence can work effectively in Harney County, Oregon, the ministry context of the author. The examples are not all inclusive, but will give researched information that has been shown to allow the Christian faith community to become the ethical and moral influence that is true to the Christian belief.

The author of this dissertation has chosen areas of method that fit his claim that the Christian faith community of Harney County, Oregon, and other communities, can become a moral and ethical influence to the non-Christian community member. The goal is to influence people for Christ in the setting that they live “so that they may be saved.”

### **Following the Scriptural Instruction**

Historically, Christians have relied upon Scripture as their major sourcebook, and early American culture ensured that there were sufficient copies of the Scripture in the current language. Ahlstrom wrote that, “Vernacular translations of the Bible, certain to be a potent force in the nation’s religious life, were beginning to circulate.”<sup>2</sup> In the Christian faith community’s attempt to influence the community, they must be aware of the Scripture and its application and interpretation to avoid promoting non-Christian behavior toward others, while justifying their behaviors on misapplied Scriptures. Christians must

---

<sup>1</sup> George Eldon Ladd.. *A Theology Of The New Testament: Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, William b. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 432.

<sup>2</sup> Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 86.

always be ready to promote Christ-likeness in their actions, and in defense of promoting moral character development.

Much of the teaching of Paul is to the Church. His writings provided sound instruction on how the Christian should present to the rest of the world. The influence of Scripture upon the Christian often calls them to living a particular way that sets them apart from the rest of the world, and in doing so they become examples of Christianity. The Apostle Paul speaking to the Church in Corinth says, “To the Church of God in Corinth to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2). “Therefore I urge you to imitate me” (1 Corinthians 4:16). He continues, “I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people...” (1 Corinthians 5:9). The nominal Christian, be it the pastor, lay leader or general congregant who claims to be a Christian, must be admonished to accept and to change their living of Christianity on the edge. Paul teaches in the book of Titus, “You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance” (Titus 2:1-2). It is with the above Scripture in mind, not conclusive but as examples that the leadership of the Church should proceed concerning the public and private influence that it holds upon all people.

Christians are obligated to influence families and children in their families and churches, and the community at large, on behalf of the authority that God has given for the good of each child. Remaining true to Scripture in witnessing to the community, children and the parents require that Christians approach them in a contextualized manner, and not fear their source of wisdom. Robert Greer writes, “In a fashion

reminiscent of Barth's theological move against the Cogito, Grenz argues that Scripture is self-authenticating and therefore needs no rational analysis to ground its authenticity."<sup>3</sup> This author believes that Grenz and Barth as previously quoted in this dissertation, are accurate, and submits that in approaching community families and youth, Christians need not fear being able to authenticate Scripture. Authentication can be left to the Holy Spirit as Christians present Jesus Christ through their living and interaction within the community.

The Scripture the author has used in Chapter Two of the dissertation is not all inclusive, nor does it imply that the Scripture was written with the intent of setting up a model for ethics and moral values. Kenneth Collins, Professor of Historical Theology and Wesley Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore Kentucky, states that,

...to the claim that the gospel answers all ends, of the law thereby rendering preaching of the latter unnecessary, Wesley replies: "But this we utterly deny. It the gospel does not answer the very first end of the law, namely, the convincing men of sin..." The ordinary men of God is to convict sinners by the law, and that only." Wesley had already advised his helpers and assistants to preach Christ in all his offices and 'to declare his law as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers....moral law undermines neither the grace of God nor the gospel...it is a...necessary expression of grace as well as a suitable preparation for the...salvation in Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the Scripture is God's Word, and thus within offers guidance as to how one can live a life according to God's will. Frank J, Matera is the Andrews-Kelly-Ryan Professor of New Testament at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and he writes,

---

<sup>3</sup> Robert Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 116.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation; The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 51.

The New Testament is immensely important for the moral or ethical life of the church, and its writings are continually employed for preaching, teaching and, nurturing the Christian community... That the Church should turn to the New Testament for moral guidance is not surprising since it contains the ethical teaching of Jesus, Paul, and others... in conjunction with those of the Old Testament, are a sure and reliable guide to moral life.<sup>5</sup>

The Scripture calls us to a life of moral and ethical action that the author refers to as “influence.” That influence for him is one of inclusion without judgment, but compassion. “He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

Although there is a great emphasis placed upon the community at large to be tolerant of the differences between gender preference, and now even religious tolerance to be more sensitive to non-Christian belief religions, it is important for the Christian to be able to understand that there is a need to be separate from those beliefs in how we use Scripture. The author of this dissertation believes that Christian moral influences can make a clear scriptural distinction between ethical and moral living based solely upon Scripture, and in collaboration with the human created rules. The late Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, founder of Foundations Bible College and Dr. H. T. Spence, his son, the present leader of the college wrote,

Biblical separation is one of the biblical distinctives of our Christian faith, and in the midst of our present distress of a twenty-first century apostasy, it is a necessary one. However, we should be very careful in this acknowledgment to lay stress upon the biblical fundamental that salvation is by grace alone and nothing else. Yet since the Christian life is rooted in biblical obedience, Christian doctrine and godly character are inseparable. Seeing that Christian character is a consequence of the New Birth, and not its cause, we therefore place it as an important part of the Christian witness. We do not believe that we are infallible, but we believe that every Christian must surrender his life to the inerrant and infallible Word of God. The transformed Christian life earnestly desires to walk in the daily path which will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. Biblical absolutes encourage

---

<sup>5</sup> Frank J. Matera. *New Testament Ethics*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 1.

us to stay away from things questionable which are related to the twenty-first century age. Let not then your good be evil spoken of [*Romans 14:16*]. Abstain from all appearance of evil [*I Thessalonians 5:22*].<sup>6</sup>

If the Church believes the Bible is its instruction for living, and for relationship with God, they are compelled to focus on the work of witness to the rest of the world, and in particular its own neighborhoods.

Preaching the Word of God, i.e. Scripture, is an imperative of Christian living. The use of Scripture each day in the practice of Christian living should be the norm, not just confined to a Sunday morning duty. Collins says, “...Wesley’s basic theological orientation, which considers Scripture to be the ultimate norm or guide for the Christian life.”<sup>7</sup> Wesley is often considered to have been a fire brand preacher with a list of do not’s. However, he was very clear about the role of Scripture as instruction in living the Christian life, but also in guiding the Christian in their role as witness to the unsaved. Wesley’s approach to Christianity was a call to accept Christ first, and then to preach Christ to the world. Collins goes on to say,

...Wesley’s best attempt to explicate what the *Word of God* – as he tells us in the *Preface* to his sermons – reveals concerning “the way to heaven – how to land safe on that happy shore... the term “way” therefore, as used by Wesley is synonymous with the term “mode” or “fashion.” It is the *Scripture* way as opposed to some other way.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, and Dr. H. T. Spence, President, “*Statements for Scriptural Separation*” Foundations Bible College, [http://www-foundations.edu/about\\_fbc/scriptural\\_separation.htm](http://www-foundations.edu/about_fbc/scriptural_separation.htm), Accessed April 20, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



Wesley states that we must be about showing people “the way to heaven,”<sup>9</sup> and the way to heaven for the Christian is through accepting Jesus Christ. A part of that accepting is to become disciples. One kind of disciple is the missionary. Often when one thinks of a missionary they immediately place the mission in another country.

But the Scripture says, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"(Mark 16:15). And elsewhere in Scripture it is written, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts1:8). The last Scripture seems to indicate that perhaps we should begin in our own neighborhoods and communities rather than sign up with the local mission board to go to Africa. The Scripture above tells the hearer where to start, “in Jerusalem, and all Judea,” the home community of the disciples. Matera further writes about what the community to which the preaching must begin. The influence of the disciples is implied to be within the community of the disciples:

The moral life is lived in and with a community of disciples who form the church...All of the Gospels agree that Jesus gathered a community of disciples to be with him, to follow him, and to share in his distinctive way of life...The moral teaching of Jesus and Paul, then, has an intensely communal dimension...It is not surprising, then, that Paul address the majority of his letters to a community of believers.<sup>10</sup>

It is with that thought the author of this dissertation claims that the place to begin is with the leadership of the congregations of the community. The primary first referenced method of this chapter is the use of and living out of the guidance of the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Matera, 251.

Scripture within our homes, churches and in the community of non-Christian members of the community.

Scripture references in preceding pages, and spiritual influences avowed by the Christian person, aid the parents in raising children to become productive citizens of the community. There are both privileges and responsibilities that result from this gift, and can be shared with the families and the children of the community. Christian faith is the basis for both moral intelligence and character education, should be recognized as such, and should remain scripturally founded. Scriptures expound to the Christian community that they have a role and responsibility for the children of the community, and that there are specific instructions to follow. Church history given in Chapter Four provides evidence that the strong family, and effective church growth, result from the practice of this instruction.

Scriptural instructions, based on God's requirement for moral, ethical, and virtuous behavior and character development, will support the reason why the Christian community has a great responsibility in the role of rearing all children within the context of their interactive contact, whether it is official or incidental. Perhaps the most essential of the above named behavioral affects are influence on ethics and character, as written by William Brown a Christian ethicist: "Like character, the element of virtue cannot be identified with any moral principle. In contrast to the ethics of duty, virtue essentially points to an ethic of being or character."<sup>11</sup>

The Christian faith community, which includes all Christian individuals, parents, churches, church leaders and participants (congregants), can operate under the authority

---

<sup>11</sup> William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 13.

given by God. We are called to act unashamedly under that authority to rear not only our individual family children, but to be influencers of all the children of the community. Moreover, we are obligated to influence families and children in our families and churches, and our community at large, on behalf of the authority that God has given for the good of each child. Remaining true to Scripture in our witness to the children and the parents in the community requires that we approach them in a contextualized manner. More importantly, we must not be fearful of our source of wisdom; the author of this dissertation believes that the approach of the church to families and youth of the community should not fear being able to authenticate Scripture. Authentication can be left to the Holy Spirit as we present Jesus Christ in our living and interaction with the community. The Church has been given scriptural instruction to carry on the mission of Jesus. Ladd writes,

...Luke has depicted a transfer of the mission from Jesus to the church, by means of the sequence of events linking his two books: resurrection, post resurrection teaching, ascension and so to Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit now presents in the church takes up the mission that Jesus “began” (Acts 1:1). Luke not only records history, but sees meaning in the historical process...Jesus’ mission and its sequel was what must happen (Lk. 24:6-7, 26-27, 33-47)...the continuing mission of the church as witness to the salvation that Jesus has brought...<sup>12</sup>

Scriptural instructions, based on God’s requirement for moral, ethical, and virtuous behavior and character development, support the reason why the Christian community is responsible for rearing all children within the context of their interactive contact. Perhaps the most essential of the above named behavioral affects are influence on ethics and character. William P. Brown writes, “Like character, the element of virtue

---

<sup>12</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A theology of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002, 238.

cannot be identified with any moral principle. In contrast to the ethics of duty, virtue essentially points to an ethic of being or character.”<sup>13</sup>

Many parents have relinquished the training of their children to the state. There must be a return to spiritual training in the home and the community in conjunction with public education. God, through Scripture, gave parental instruction and parents must listen to the inspiration given in Scripture, “He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:6). The Christian faith community, which includes all Christian individuals, parents, churches, church leaders, and participants, must operate under God’s authority. God calls Christians to act unashamedly to rear individual family children, and to influence all children. Paul writes in the letter to Titus, “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you” (Titus 2:7 NKJV).

Genesis emphasizes the importance of children: “The Children whom God has graciously given . . . they are my sons, whom God has given me here” (Gen. 33:5, 48:9). Psalms asserts, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD” (Psa. 127:3). Christian families are responsible to teach and train their children in areas of morality and righteous character. In the practice of this training, the influence will be spread to the children of the community by the strong moral and ethical character taught by Christian families to their own. The Christian community should consider all children, whether biological or

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

community neighbors are gifts from God. These gifts are the future daughters and sons who will become the future mothers and fathers of future children.

Every child has the capacity for good and bad; these are the basic tendencies unique to each child. The root word of “train up” (Prov. 22:6) in the Hebrew is a word used to describe the palate or the roof of the mouth. It was used to describe the actions of a Hebrew mid-wife who after helping to deliver a baby would dip her finger in a paste made of dates and rub it on the gums of the new baby to create thirst and start the baby’s suckling instinct. The Christian parent’s job is to create such a thirst in children for the things of God. The responsibility of raising children is given directly to the Christian parent: “Children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children” (2 Cor. 12:14). Instruction must be done in such a manner as to keep the parents scriptural in their own lives, not just in training their children: “And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

Child rearing is an ongoing responsibility. The father and the mother have a lifelong responsibility for modeling the pattern for the child’s morality and character. Paul gives parents, and specifically the father, instructions: “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity” (1 Tim. 3:4). That dignity must be demonstrated in all the dealings with the family, the church, and the community.

Christian moral influence upon the community at large by the Christian faith community requires outreach and an appropriate context. The church must be wholly contextualized in the twenty-first century, while remaining true to Scripture. The

implication is that the church and the individual must become wholly committed to God, Scripture, and the community. If the church does not include community, then it ignores the other two issues. Michael Keeling is a lecturer in Practical Theology and Christian Ethics at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. He wrote, “In the twentieth century, Christian ethics has become concentrated on the question of social justice.”<sup>14</sup>

J.I.H.McDonald, the Scottish Ethicist supports the above position as he writes,

Without denying that the first duty of the church is to the church, Davies held that the moral perspectives of the New Testament were considerably wider. Eschatology has to be understood contextually: that is, in relation to the world the Old Testament and Jewish eschatology. When this is done, eschatological hope, as well as judgment, is seen to pertain to the whole world: it is the kingdoms of this world that are to become the kingdoms of God in Christ. Thus, eschatology lends to ethics a social and cosmic dimension.<sup>15</sup>

As the Christian community becomes involved in their community, they can model Christian living and this manifests in their inward spirits. Jesus said, “By their fruits you will recognize them” (Matt. 7:20), and “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). Christians can teach by example and this behavior is a part of spiritual formation that reflects a relationship with Jesus Christ and an understanding of Scripture as life instruction.

### **Influence of the Church’s Mission**

Twenty-first-century witnesses should remain true to Scripture while operating in a contextualized manner. Darrell Guder is Princeton Theological Seminary’s Henry

---

<sup>14</sup> M. Keeling, *The Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990), 1.

<sup>15</sup> McDonald, *Biblical Interpretation and Christian Ethics*, 144.

Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology and editor of the book, *Missional Church; A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. It is stated in that book that,

The particular mission community is the central focus of God's mission, as it carries out its witness in a specific cultural setting. It is not biblical, however, for particular communities of the visible, organized church to exist in isolation from one another. Particularity is not exclusivity. The calling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost began to produce what 1 Peter calls a "race, priesthood, nation, and people" (2:9-10), a worldwide multicultural fellowship of witness.<sup>16</sup>

Christians love God and themselves because they want to spend eternity with Him. In loving neighbors that much, Christians are charged to do all they can to influence their lives for Christ. Jesus taught his disciples that they must go and preach and teach the world about their need for repentance of sin. He was very clear in where they should begin, "to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:27). As the instruction to the disciples was to start where they live, Christians must witness to their communities. Moreover, this begins in individual households, then into the church, and the community. Christians can begin by teaching the spiritual benefits of Godly wisdom. My Son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:1-5).

God obliges the Christian faith community to become involved in the rearing of all the children in the community, insomuch as God provides the opportunity. Children will imitate their parents' lives, and in turn will be models for Christian living to other

---

<sup>16</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 248.

children. Christian parents are responsible for coming alongside the children who their children associate with daily. They can influence them, and guide them scripturally toward developing Christian morals, character, ethics, and virtues.

The church leadership and the congregants must have a vehicle in which it can confidently increase the strength of its existing families, as well as being able to reach the un-churched families of the community. One way that can happen is from the advent and promotion of active highly visible churches in the community that uses their own influence in the world.

Churches and para-church organizations have sprung up throughout the United States. The outreach of the church in Harney County, Oregon is active in several ways as well. Burns Christian Church operates a low cost to no cost thrift shop. The Pentecostal Church provides upscale clothing and services to couples wanting to unite in marriage. The Lutheran and Episcopal Churches provide some essential no cost food and financial aid. The idea that the church must become involved beyond the doors of the church is a viable means to become a scripturally evident ethical and moral influence upon the non-Christian. Dr. Amy L. Sherman is a Senior Fellow at the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research and Director of the Center on Faith in Communities at the Foundation for American Renewal, and she says, “Inside of our churches we are to be a reflection of the coming kingdom, and we are to be doing the work of the kingdom – a work of justice, of love, of healing, of hope and transformation.”<sup>17</sup>

There are many monikers given to the several different churches that have chosen to become highly visible in the communities in which they serve. One such movement has

---

<sup>17</sup> Amy Sherman, “The Church as Community Asset,” keynote address, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee National Conference, March 2000.



identified its work as the Missional Church. Regardless of the name attached or the identity taken, it is important to remember that the purpose of the church is to become a Christian influence that provides Christ driven relationships with the non-Christian from a Christian ethical and moral base.

There are several areas of concern of influence that most often do not seem obvious to the congregant, yet are most surprisingly un-dealt with by the pastor leader and the leadership team with whom the pastor works. There are questions that need to be asked by the pastors of themselves, the leadership team, and ultimately the congregants. They are questions concerning the reputation of the church in the community. Robert Lewis is Pastor-at-Large for Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he served as Directional Leader for 20 years. He is the founder of Men's Fraternity and chairman of the board of Fellowship Associates, a church consulting and leadership organization. He has given the church a list of questions that must be answered before it moves toward active purposeful influencing work. The questions are:

- Can you imagine the community in which you live being genuinely thankful for your church?
- Can you imagine city leaders valuing your church's friendship and participation in the community – even asking for it?
- Can you imagine the neighborhoods around your church talking behind your back about “how good it is” to have your church in the area because of the tangible witness you've offered them of God's love?
- Can you imagine a large number of your church members actively engaged in, and passionate about, community service, using their gifts and abilities in ways and at levels they never thought possible?
- Can you imagine the community actually changing (Prov. 11:11) because of the impact of your church's involvement?
- Can you imagine many in your city, formerly cynical and hostile toward Christianity, actually praising God for your church and the positive contributions your members have made in Jesus' name?

- Can you imagine the spiritual harvest that would naturally follow if all this were true?<sup>18</sup>

Lewis seems to believe that although church growth is important, it is the influence that the church has upon the un-churched that is most important. In expressing that view he writes,

Often, as “engineers of churches,” pastors and lay leaders desperately desire to bridge the gap, but when measuring the gorge with the world’s mathematics, they come to believe the span is simply too vast. . . .many pastors resort to the. . . “Fallback methodologies” as substitutes for spanning the great divide.<sup>19</sup>

Lewis believes that being culturally relevant, promising heaven now and just preaching the Word have their place, and that even staying the course has its value. The questions remains, “What impact is the church having on the community?”<sup>20</sup>

The twenty-first century church in America, and no less in the community within which the author of this dissertation lives, is one of doubting parishioners, i.e. the predominant culture encased in the name of Postmodernism. Postmodernism has been recognized in the church since at least 1972, yet treated as though it is a twentieth century phenomenon. Lewis writes that long before postmodern thought, Jesus dealt with similar situations:

Jesus Christ was a daring bridge builder of another kind, Against his own overwhelming odds; he imagined a bridge of unprecedented spiritual influence --- one that, could span a chasm roaring with skepticism, indifference, hostility, even persecution. He imagined a bridge able to connect his people --- “my church,” he called them--- to a disbelieving, disinterested world.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Robert Lewis with Rob Wilkins, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, (Grand Rapids, MI., Zondervan, 2001) 13, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 27.

The author of this dissertation also believes that the approach of the church to the un-churched can be effective and productive by modifying some of the aforementioned programmatic approaches, i.e. being contextual and relevant. Those attributes remain important, but not as standalone answers to the moral and ethical influence of the church. He will provide insight for a path to becoming an ethical and moral influence upon the non-Christian population based upon his own pastoral setting and at Oregon Life Solutions, a company founded by himself and his wife Catherine, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Oregon Life Solutions is a counseling and therapy service that deals specifically with psychological issues for Christians seeking help; and to a large segment of the mandated population.

It is the author's belief that the starting place for the church to become Christian moral influencers of the un-churched community is with the leadership of the churches. Pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, church sessions, and boards must all come together in agreement that the mission, or at least a part of the mission of the church, is to influence the community in which they live to a Christian morality. In previous chapters the author has stated that although recognition and tolerance of other religions is important, it is more important to promote our belief in Jesus Christ. That promotion comes in the form of many modalities within the Christian Church. The question remains, "How can the church influence the un-churched of the community?" MaryKate Morse, Professor of Leadership and Spiritual Formation, Director of Strategic Planning, and Director of Hybrid and Special Programs at George Fox Evangelical Seminary, calls this,

Bodied influence... Authentic leadership that catalyzes a group toward deep change and moves its members in positive, energizing directions – involves the group acting together. A leader helps give form and direction, but everyone,

regardless of gender, age or amount of experience, has the right and responsibility to be part of the influencing process.<sup>22</sup>

The pastor leader must be prepared to lead his team. In order to remain prepared they must remain on the edge of what is working in leadership. Leonard Sweet, author and Doctorate of Ministry Professor at George Fox Evangelical Seminary stated, “If you are not fully engaged in a program of continuing education, you cannot possibly lead a congregation who most likely is.”<sup>23</sup> Good leadership is important in any organization, but in the church only great leadership will lead the followers to greatness. In the case of being moral influences greatness is imperative. The goal is not to build bigger churches. The goal should be to become a Christian influence in the world to lead people to Christ. It is not just about being a moral person. It is about living a life that is true to the gospel and with a fervor that will not allow for us to be just good Christians when the goal should be to become great Christian witnesses (influencers). Good leadership will miss the target. Writing about being “Great,” Jim Collins, a student and teacher to several great companies, author of four books and featured in the Wall Street Journal, Harvard Business Review, and Business Week, states that,

We don’t have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don’t have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in a large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life.<sup>24</sup>

Pastors and church leadership can be ready to step forward to lead churches into the excitement of being influencers. Leadership will desire to be spiritually convinced

---

<sup>22</sup> MaryKate Morse, *Making Room For Leadership; Power, Space and Influence*, Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008, 32,33.

<sup>23</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2004, 163.

<sup>24</sup> Jim Collins, *Good To Great*, New York: Harper Collins, 2001, 1.

that the role of Christians is not to go to church on Saturday or Sunday to sing and praise God alone, but to become “culture warriors,”<sup>25</sup> a term coined by news commentator Bill O’Reilly of Fox News Channel, in the vain that we are attuned to the culture around us. And that we can become “in” the culture without becoming “of” the culture by becoming influencers of the culture from the foundation of our belief in Jesus. The culture warriors that the author of this paper is referring to is not of the type described in the referenced book above, but warriors of a kind that will come only from commitment and desire to carry out the mission of the charge set forth in Chapter Two, and witnessed in the history of the church in Chapter Three.

### **Spiritual Formation and Direction**

The church that is ready to be an excited spiritual influence will be spiritually excited without prompting from the leadership. Richard Foster is the founder of Renovaré, which is committed to working for the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ. He has been a Friends pastor and a Professor of Theology at Friends University, and a Quaker author on Christian spirituality. He writes,

. . . heaven and earth are on tiptoe waiting for the emergence of a Spirit-led, Spirit-intoxicated, spirit-empowered people. All of creation watches expectantly for the springing up of a disciplined, freely gathered, martyr people who know in this life the life and power of the kingdom of God. It has happened before. It can happen again.<sup>26</sup>

The approach of the Church as to how it will accomplish the above cannot be arrogant or exclusive. It must be trained and ready to make the church and the services

---

<sup>25</sup> Bill O’Reilly, *Culture Warriors*, Title page.

<sup>26</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline; The Path To Spiritual Growth*, (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1998), 175.

provided available to all in the community. Foster offers the following outline for getting started:

1. Let's become intentionally Godward in our orientation. Not self-oriented, not success-oriented, not church-oriented, not seeker-oriented, but God-oriented.
2. Let's stop using a marketing approach to church life. The church is not a vendor of religious goods and services but the Community of Faith, living in faith and through faith and by faith alone.
3. We do not need to mimic the entertainment industry of our culture. We win people to Christ not by entertainment but by the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. We should become intentional about learning the "habits of the heart" for Biblical holiness. We need daily spiritual disciplines rather than sporadic bursts of inspiration or enthusiasm.
5. Let's quit using the strutting peacock CEO of contemporary culture as a model for Christian leadership.
6. Let's make certain that our Godward orientation is always for the sake of the world. The Church exists for the sake of the world, which at the very minimum means less stress on preserving our institutions and more stress on serving the poor.
7. Let's get rid of our "edifice complex." Buildings are not bad, but neither are they the sum total of everything important either. Let's use buildings to help and serve people and not as monuments to our own egos.
8. Let's engage in vigorous, culture-sensitive evangelism. All peoples need to hear the good news of Jesus and His love.<sup>27</sup>

The above outline is not in and of itself the answer. It is the belief of the author of this dissertation that the approach of the Christian influence cannot be abrasive or exclusive. The moral influence must not just talk about what Christians stand for, or how Christians are better than another religion. It must be about presenting a Christian ethical and moral influence.

---

<sup>27</sup> Richard Foster, *Seven Steps Toward Renewal*, <http://www.charismanews.com>, Reproduced by permission from Dr. Yonggi Cho's "Church Growth" magazine.

The above guidelines from Foster calls for the pastor leader, the leadership teams, and the congregation to begin to practice spiritual formation. It would be greatly beneficial to the success of the formation for the pastor to model inductive spiritual formation by becoming involved in personal spiritual direction. George Fox Evangelical Seminary teaches that, “Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit and grounded in Scripture and a faith community.”<sup>28</sup> If this is true then it becomes an essential first step for the leadership of the churches. The author of this dissertation believes that strength of the person can be gained as well by engaging in spiritual direction. Simply put, spiritual direction is an exercise completed with the aid of a spiritual director. “The spiritual director facilitates,” as stated by Maureen Conroy, the coordinator of two developmental programs for spiritual directors at the Upper Room; and who is also engaged in spiritual direction, retreat work, and adult education. Maureen holds a M. Div. Degree from the Seminary, and a D. Min. degree from St. Mary's University, Baltimore. She states that the spiritual director directs the, “directee’s relationship with God.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Spiritual Formation of the Leadership and the Congregation**

Spiritual formation becomes imperative in our training children in the home and in the church. When interacting with children outside of the church, the approach to training or influencing should be handled differently. Witness in the twenty first century

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/formation.html>, Programs website, (accessed September 8, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Maureen Conroy, *The Discerning Heart, Discovering a Personal God*, (Chicago: Layola Press, 1993), 215.

should remain true to Scripture while operating in a contextualized manner. Darrell Guder is the Peachtree Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Columbia Theological Seminary. He believes that an important part of the formation of the Christian individual, and the congregation(s), ethical and moral influence should follow the Missional form of evangelism, i.e. Christian influence. He writes,

The particular mission community is the central focus of God's mission, as it carries out its witness in a specific cultural setting. It is not biblical, however, for particular communities of the visible, organized church to exist in isolation from one another. Particularity is not exclusivity. The calling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost began to produce what 1 Peter calls a 'race, priesthood, nation, and people' (2:9-10), a worldwide multicultural fellowship of witness.<sup>30</sup>

The pastoral leadership can sustain the work of the Gospel. It can do that by nourishing and strengthening the congregants to become spiritually formed as persons who will give of themselves to the life work of the Church. As they become spiritually formed they can become more effective disciples, who will then become effective moral and ethical influences upon the non-churched. The author of this dissertation believes that an important part of spiritual formation is becoming a viable part of the community of their faith. Jesus used a pastoral plan as recorded in Luke 24:13-35, where he joined the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He joined them in their discussion of what concerned them for that day. The author of the paper believes that to be effective as a pastor leader, the pastor needs to join people in their daily concerns of life. The pastor leader can help develop the spirit by sharing and listening to their sorrows, joys, and grief.

---

<sup>30</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William P. Eerdmans, 1998), 248.



The author received his early spiritual teaching from the Church of The Nazarene. His thoughts about how moral influence should be brought about came primarily from the teachings of John Wesley as presented by the Church. John Wesley taught social justice that was inclusive with the intent of feeding the physical body before asking the non-Christian to deal with the sins in their life. He preached what some would identify as “fire and brimstone” theology, when in fact he taught something much more important with a fiery passion.

John O. Gooch, a Wesley historian, is a retired pastor who currently is a youth ministry consultant, a youth Sunday school teacher, a Stephens Ministry leader, and a frequent writer of United Methodist curriculum resources. He writes,

Wesley preached and practiced active charity.... Wesley did not believe that we are saved by doing good works. Only the grace of God can save us. But he did believe that doing good works was a way to respond to the saving grace of God. Finally, Wesley knew that people are in no condition to listen to the gospel if they are hungry, cold, or without decent clothing.<sup>31</sup>

The leader will be able to understand the un-churched population. The author’s experience working as a social worker counselor has taught him to listen. Doing research about people requires listening to people. The pastor leader will need to listen to the people in all secular population centers, socioeconomic, political, gender, and levels of education.

The pastor leader can train his co-leaders how to approach the multi-cultured population, and sub-groups of those cultures. Being able to target who the Christian influence should be upon is problematic, in that the thesis of this paper is that the Christian ought to be moral influencers of the un-churched (non-Christian). Therefore the

---

<sup>31</sup> John O. Gooch, *John Wesley For the Twenty First Century*, Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2006. 21.

pastor leader will also understand the specific definition of the target group of un-churched. The following definition does not fully meet the criterion of the author's thesis for being moral influencers of the non-Christian population, however it does help to identify those to whom the author of this dissertation refers to as non-Christian or un-churched.

The George Barna Research Group, a statistical and demographical gathering organization of churches, reveals the following:

...we define an unchurched adult for our research: an adult (18 or older) who has not attended a Christian church service within the past six months, not including a holiday service (such as Easter or Christmas) or a special event at a church (such as a wedding or funeral).

#### Spiritual Commitment

- More than three out of five (62%) unchurched adults consider themselves to be Christian. (2006)
- 44% claim they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today. (2006)
- In a typical week, 19% of unchurched people read the bible compared to 47% of all adults who do so. (2006)
- In a typical week, 66% of unchurched people pray compared to 84% of all adults who do so. (2006)
- Three-fifths (61%) of the church population has accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, compared with one out of every five unchurched adults (21%) who has done so. (2006)<sup>32</sup>

For the sake of clarity, the author of the dissertation will identify the un-churched target group as people who not only do not attend church, but who also do not consider themselves Christian. Although the people identified by the Barna Group should not be excluded by the Christian faith community. The reason for encouraging the moral

---

<sup>32</sup> George Barna, The Barna Group, "Unchurched." <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=38> (accessed June 18, 2008).

influence of that group as well, but not exclusively, becomes obvious by the following data:

Beliefs

- 64% of the unchurched say that Satan is not a living being but is a symbol of evil. (2006)
- 63% of unchurched adults state that a good person can earn his or her way into Heaven. (2006)
- Slightly less than half (48%) of the unchurched define God as the perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the universe who continues to rule His creation today. (2006)
- 51% of the unchurched assert that when Jesus Christ lived on earth, He committed sins. (2006)<sup>33</sup>

Doing good deeds by the Christian community alone will not complete the task of Christian moral influence either. There must be an action that is distinguishably different than that of secular and non-Christian religious organizations. The choices for Christian moral ethics sometimes look just like other belief systems. In order for the Christian to proceed with what they hope is moral influence, they must first know the foundation of their morals. The deontological moral belief systems call one to obedience to God. Whereas, other belief systems call for following and keeping lists of rules that are sometimes referred to as ethical standards.

The challenge for the church in the twenty-first century toward a constant, ongoing, and renewed moral and ethical influence upon the un-churched is huge. To meet the challenge the leadership of the church must rise to the occasion by doing more than subscribing to bigger and better programs for the seasons. The leadership of the church must be able to recognize the population in which it exists.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

The author of this dissertation believes that the church leadership ought to place more spiritual energy upon the teaching of the church post conversion to the reaching out beyond the walls of the church to the moral influence of the community of un-churched persons within their own geographical boundaries. That is not to say that the churches should give up on mission beyond the United States, but that there must first be a great emphasis placed on the local mission first. It is also his belief that the teaching of the pastoral staff leadership and the lay leadership ought to begin in the pulpit. The Christian person should first, foremost, and freely be willing to not only influence by deed, but to also influence by verbal witness.

The churches of Harney County can see the need for an active influence rather than a passive influence that will rely upon the un-churched to somehow identify our lack of antisocial activity as Christian morality and ethical standards. With that in mind, the Christian faith community can serve as missionaries in the local community.

The American community has become diverse and multicultural, as well as in Harney County which is considered a frontier rural society. It is a society that provides the Christian the opportunity to express daily through their faith. There are signs around the community that point to a thirst for answers to questions often written about, but seldom modeled. The importance of sustained spiritual formation can be gained with leadership that has availed itself to spiritual formation and direction.

Christian moral influence upon the community at large by the Christian faith community requires steadfast outreach, rather than complacently waiting for the community to come to the church. Context is a very important concern. The church should make a strong attempt at being wholly contextualized in the twenty-first century,

while remaining true to the Scripture. The implication is that the church and the individual must become wholly committed to God, Scripture, and the community. If we do not include community, then the other two are being ignored. Being able to present Christian moral influence requires a correct interpretation of the Scripture that will be applied to those lives from the leadership to the layperson.

### **Where Can The Leadership Begin?**

Alan Roxburgh is a pastor, teacher, writer, and consultant with more than 30 years experience in church leadership, consulting and seminary education. Alan has pastored varying congregations, as well as directed an urban training center, served as a seminary professor and the director of a center for mission and evangelism. Fred Romanuk, is an organizational psychologist who has led strategic planning initiatives for many large organizations in Canada and the United States. Together they have taught and written about Missional Leadership. Their definition of a Missional Church is,

The church has been called into life to be both the means of this mission and a foretaste of where God is inviting all creation to go. Just as its Lord is a mission-shaped God, so to the community of God's people exists, not for themselves but for the sake of the work. Mission is therefore not a program or project some people in the church do from time to time...the church's very nature is to be God's missionary people.<sup>34</sup>

Given the above definition, it is then the role of the Christian Faith Community to go into the community of the church to be missionaries, or in the definition of the author of this dissertation, influencers, for Jesus.

---

<sup>34</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church To Reach A Changing World*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), xv.

The pastor leader will need to be able to work closely with the other leadership in the church to provide vision. A vision according to Robert Quinn, "...willing to die for..."<sup>35</sup> For the church to be able to move forward with the mission the church has a need to know the mission, and the mission comes from a vision that catches on with the majority. The pastor leader will, if not from his own divine revelation, then with the help of the other leadership members, present a vision to the whole congregation. Robert Quinn, Margaret Elliot Tracy Collegiate Professor in Business Administration, and Professor of Management and Organizations at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business states,

The term radical is derived from the Latin word for "root." In mathematics ...we use the radical sign to indicate the square root. To make radical change, one must move to the root, the origin or archetype. An influential vision reflects the insight of an individual or group that has deeply contemplated the core issues.<sup>36</sup>

Radical change with a vision or a vision that requires radical change will require that most of the congregation will need to understand the vision and accept it as their own as well. In the American church history of Chapter Four one example was given of the vision of Bill Hybels. His vision was radical, but it was a vision that was first held by a few and then later multiplied when interpreted to others. The author of this paper is not writing to promote church growth through numbers, but through the ethical and moral influence by the present members to those who are in the community and are un-churched.

---

<sup>35</sup> Robert E. Quinn, *Deep Change; Discovering the Leader Within*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996) 197.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

The leadership of the local congregation will need to be able to become involved to a greater extent in the society to which it intends to influence. Being able to minister to the non-Christian member of the community will need to become recognizable as different as what happens in the church on Saturday or Sunday morning. Roxburgh and Romanuk believe that,

It is critical to help people grapple with and understand their society. Engaging in a discussion about the changes that affect both society and church is difficult while we're in the middle of it all. Every day, newspapers and other news media determine our thinking in ways we do not begin to understand... The role of a Missional leader is translation. Helping people see that "this is that." To do this, people need to learn to ask new questions of their context and the church.<sup>37</sup>

Helping the leadership and the congregation to understand the community society in Harney County, Oregon is critical in that the overall demographic and personality of the population is changing. Twenty years ago the makeup of the community was primarily ranchers, loggers and support professionals. Today the Harney County community has changed with the advent of increased technology, and a growing presence of government agencies that support law enforcement, land use, and agriculture.

The message of Christian ethical and moral influence does not need to change, but the way the message is given, as if in a foreign land, must speak the local language and often must dress like the natives to be accepted and trusted.

### **Non-Church Based Christian Influence**

In the Harney County, Oregon community a well known youth ministry group, Young Life, it is active with all youth in the community by providing various weekly and monthly offerings that provide a place for juveniles to meet and engage one another. As

---

<sup>37</sup> Roxburgh and Romanuk, 174-175.

an organization they are not a function of a typical church, but do fill the Missional definition to be God's missionaries to the community. The Young Life program is strongly supported by community leaders and churches as well.

Kristy Timco, a former local district attorney, private practice attorney, and presently a sitting judge and the supervisor of the regional CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program for children in foster care, uses her scripturally based convictions in her work. Kristy's husband Eric, an Oregon State Police Trooper, states that he most often finds that his own morality fits well with the ethical code of his agency. He states that in dealing with offenders he often prays before confronting the offender. Kristy and Eric believe that their Christian ethical and moral standards promote more effective dealings with the public.<sup>38</sup>

William Cramer Jr., the Circuit Court Judge of Grant and Harney Judge is a Christian who uses scriptural teaching in the performance of his duties without finding conflict with the law. He is an officer of the court who uses complete discretion to accomplish his decision.<sup>39</sup>

Dean Hoodenpyl, probations/parole officer of Grant County Oregon, often discusses the help he receives from God in carrying out his duties. He talks with his parolees and probationers about the importance of considering Christ in the change process following conviction of a crime. Dean not only evangelizes verbally, he lives out his Christian moral behavior within the criminal community.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Timko, Personal interview, December, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Cramer, Personal interview, September, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Dean Hoodenpyl, Personal interview, May 13, 2008.



The anecdotal summaries above are examples of how we Christians can be ethical and moral influences outside of the church. There are many other public servants, merchants, and officials in our community who practice the presentation of Christian and moral ethics in their lives.

### **Christian Moral and Ethical Influence in Harney County Oregon**

As a retired minister the author has founded a company that offers treatment for persons with psychological and behavioral issues. Oregon Life Solutions (OLS) adheres to the policies of the State of Oregon as well as to the teaching of Scripture in dealing with their clients. The following paragraphs will describe how he is able to respond to his thesis that it is, “The role of the Christian Faith community toward the ethical and moral influence of the non-Christian population of Harney County, Oregon.”

Although there are sufficient treatment offices and one public mental health clinic, OLS is able to introduce, with Christian moral influence, modality for treatment that will lead persons to thinking about the ultimate change agent in their life. OLS uses recognized behavioral therapy techniques along with Christian thought. The idea that OLS separates therapy technique from Christian thought does not establish a line of separation in providing the client with ethical and moral influence that is Christian based.

Christian living in the community should affirm the humanity, dignity, and blessing of every member. Christians must worship, celebrate, and witness to all others in the community; and extend an invitation for them to join in through the presentation of Christian character, morals, ethics, and treatment of others because of Christian identity in Jesus.

Christian teacher, writer, and scientist, Tedd Tripp states that, “The person your child becomes is a product of two things. The first is his life experience. The second is how he interacts with that experience.”<sup>41</sup> Social science also purports that adults are the products of these same influencers. Coleman and Broen, both psychologists, and authors of psychology texts, say,

The basic sources of personality development are heredity and environment. However, as a person’s genetic inheritance interacts with and is shaped by environmental factors, there emerges a self-structure that becomes an important influence in the shaping of further development.<sup>42</sup>

OLS clinicians believe that the adult offender, persons with psychological issues, and persons with negative behavioral practices are also a product of their life experience and how they chose to interact with that experience.

After the initial intake and assessments OLS begins the Batterers Intervention, Sexual Offense, and Critical Thinking programs with a twelve week introduction to shame based behaviors. Using this modality allows us to become Christian moral influences because we use instruction from John Bradshaw, author of, *Healing the Shame That Binds You*, and Professor Richard Shaw, Psychology Professor at George Fox University. OLS has also adopted the relational values of the George Fox University counseling graduate department as how we want to be spiritually active in the practice of our client care. Those values are:

Relational Values

- Faith - Seeking spiritual integration, founded upon the Christian faith.
- Compassion - Responding to the needs of others, particularly the disenfranchised.

---

<sup>41</sup> Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), 10.

<sup>42</sup> James C. Coleman and William E. Broen Jr., *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), 94.

- Justice - Ensuring that everyone has a voice and that the vulnerable are protected.
- Equality - Honoring diversity and promoting acceptance while not compromising value systems.
- Respect - Acknowledging that the image of God remains stamped on the life of every person.
- Grace - Recognizing that grace is extended to all and is to be expressed towards all.
- Forgiveness - Taking responsibility to forgive and be forgiven.<sup>43</sup>

OLS chose those same values because of the connection of the counselors to the University and because they find their mission closely aligned with the values of the department and the University. They have a strong belief that as Christian professionals, who deal with the persons identified in the value statement, they must maintain a measure or water mark that continually will bring them back to our dependence upon God as our primary instructor through His Word.

The author of the dissertation will provide below some practice issue that the clinicians use as a way to bring Christian moral influence to the client seeking help, without being religiously confrontive. Because all who seek our help know that the counselors are Christians they are also aware from the practice detail brochure that the counselors will from time to time refer to the Scripture as a source of behavioral change.

Even as Christian counselors we must be aware of the need for medical and psychiatric treatment when needed. In addition, we must look for the underlying psychological and spiritual causes such as background, stress, learned helplessness, negative thinking, anger, and guilt.

Many of the OLS clients have been mandated to treatment. Because OLS is not a public agency clinic the clinicians often are able to deal with the environment that has

---

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.georgefox.edu/soe/counseling/values.html>, George Fox University Graduate Department of Counseling, (accessed December 21, 2008).

caused the antisocial behavior in a more aggressive manner. In some cases, changes in the environment can be extremely beneficial in overcoming depressed states. Sometimes any change no matter how minor can have an enormous effect by itself, as well as being a first step in leading to self-directive changes!

OLS uses Spiritual Resources. Holy Scripture can be a great comfort to the depressed. The Psalms are of particular usefulness since many themes of comfort and support are found therein. In addition, faith in God is a powerful force for allowing the counselee to gain a more balanced view of their situation and their proper relation to it. In prison, Paul learned how to be content in all of his circumstances, knowing that God strengthens all of His children and supplies all of their needs, especially in times of crisis. The counselors deal with modes of thinking. Often Christians promote unrealistic expectations of "perfect" behavior because of feelings of helplessness and guilt over minor issues. OLS counselors believe that it is important to constantly reinforce the fact of God's control in our lives and that we need not always be in personal control. Often this way of counsel comes about half way into a treatment term after the client is fully aware of our belief of God's power to change our thinking. We use a standard of behavioral practice based upon influence that leads to thoughts which develop a belief system that ultimately become our life behaviors.

The OLS counselor will identify the environment from which the client has arrived. In some cases, changes in the environment can be extremely beneficial in overcoming depressed states. Sometimes any change no matter how minor can have an enormous effect by itself as well as being a first step in leading to self-directive changes.

OLS counselors do not purport to be the all to end all, nor do they believe that they have somehow received a divine revelation as to how depression occurs and is relieved or how one lives out their life. The counselors do use techniques developed by other Christian and non-Christian methods to bring about change of moral and ethical behavior.

The knowledge that God is in control can give great encouragement even in times that seem without hope, even when the individual does not professes a Christian belief. Unfortunately, some forms of Christian counseling have been shown (by Christians, not secular psychiatrists) to be counterproductive in relieving and preventing depression. We use a typically espoused secular treatment modality, CBT or cognitive behavioral therapy, to relieve depression.

Being told to "trust in God and the depression will go away" may lead to an even deeper depression when symptoms are not relieved at once! It may even lead to a crisis of faith where unrealistic expectations of God's immediate intervention do not match with His Will for the person. What seems to be of more help is a community that offers prayer and sympathy for the depressed person with as little judgment as possible. Focusing on sin as a cause of depression often leads to more feelings of guilt, and a further deepening of the depression.

The segment of clientele who are mandated to our service are often post incarcerated persons who have arrived not only with the memory of the behavior that put them in prison, but also with a reinforced and blustered negative and toxic behavior often referred to as antisocial. It is often a reaction to the so called change and rehabilitation practices of the penile system. The approach is one that seems simple, but did not

promote lasting change. According to behavioral scientist and psychologist, James R.

Acker and Robert M. Bohm,

The influence of religion and morality on criminal justice has been of major importance throughout history. Morality is society's set of accepted rules and norms of behavior. Morality is commonly part of religious belief; a primary role of religion is to exert control over its followers by setting and promoting rules and customs for people to follow. In turn, these rules help establish criminal laws in a government's justice system. The role of religion in defining crimes in America's colonial society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was clear. Key crimes included blasphemy (showing a lack of reverence toward God), sexual deviance, and heresy (holding a belief that conflicts with church doctrine). Early punishments focused on shame and guilt as ways of bringing those who strayed back into the fold. This shame and guilt were supposed to make the offender apologize, ask forgiveness, and live a better life.<sup>44</sup>

Because we continue to also treat each client with human dignity and allow for personal choice, each mandated client is offered the opportunity to withdraw from our treatment services. They are informed that treatment will be based upon our Christian belief system coupled with appropriate secular theory.

The author of this dissertation believes that the best results for an improved lifestyle require a change of heart. In that many of our clients are not Christians, we always strive to make our counseling and therapy approach evidenced-based and in accordance with best practice for the state in which we operate. At the same time we continue to operate from a base of Scripture that will always find secular agreement in that it will bring about lasting behavioral change for the client.

Georgia Harkness, a leading American Methodist and ecumenical theologian, (1891-1974) wrote,

The ethics of the Church, and individually of the churches, stands midway between the ethics of Christendom and the ethics of the gospel as it comes to us in Jesus Christ. The church, insofar as it is faithful to its mission as the carrier of the

---

<sup>44</sup> <http://law.jrank.org/pages/12116/Moral-Religious-Influences.html>. (accessed, June 10,2010).

gospel and is a fellowship of person sincerely trying to follow Jesus, sees more clearly what is right at hand than does the surrounding society. It is for this reason that it is called to be the “conscience of the State” and it’s obligated without falling into a trite and secularistic moralism to proclaim and practice the principles of Christian morality. ..when the Church through its leaders ... speak from a Christian frame of reference, it both indicates current practices and sets higher goals....<sup>45</sup>

It is with the above in mind that the author of this dissertation restates that the Christian community can address moral and ethical issues by providing answers to problems the community faces, and by influencing secular community families positively through living out the instruction given to families in both the Old and New Testaments. Although the author of this dissertation has addressed the entirety of the Christian faith community he recognizes that the church continues to change. Much was focused in this and the preceding chapter on the postmodern generation. The author believes that it is the obligation of the leadership of the church, from the oldest to the youth, to become responsive to the call of the Christian influence.

The church in the future will be directed by the children of today and it is imperative that the pastoral leadership, lay leadership, and the teaching staff of the church respond to the Scripture given earlier, “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned” (Titus 2:7).

The author of this dissertation has not written the challenge to the Christian faith community to become just outward examples of how to create lists of ethical behaviors, and to tell church leadership and congregations how to seem to be Christian moralist. His intent is to provide thought provocation toward becoming more active beyond the church

---

<sup>45</sup> Georgia Harkness, *Christian Ethics* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), 21, 22.

and into the community specifically where he resides. In making that challenge he states that the church must first understand why it exists. He believes that witness through evangelism is the key to providing the influence. He states that through that evangelism the church will become the Christian ethical and moral influence that he believes God intends for His church to be. It is then the role and responsibility of the church leadership (pastors and appointed and elected leaders) to provide the ethical and moral influence to the congregations. In turn the congregation can take that influence into the community.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS

James B. Nelson, Professor Emeritus of Christian Ethics at the United

Theological Seminary, wrote,

The church lives in manifold interdependence with other groups; constantly penetrating others with its influences and being penetrated by them. If such were not the case, it would be difficult to see how the church could be a socializing community of any importance at all. If the sheer quantity of time spent by individuals in regular church gatherings is compared to that spent in other primary relationships...the church's socializing influence would seem severely limited...The manner of its interrelation with them and its consequent effect upon socialization and identity formation, then, become matters of considerable importance.<sup>1</sup>

Michael B. Regele is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA. As CEO of MissionInsite, Regele is responsible for guiding system and service innovation.

He states that, "The church's inward focus is a grave illness."<sup>2</sup>

It is natural that as Christians we would want to be socially involved in the church family, for Christ-followers are to "love one another," (references to this phrase for the church abide by), but Scripture has also taught, "... Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mk. 16:15).

This Chapter will present conclusions that support all of the preceding chapters that provide evidence to the Christian faith community to direct us toward a conscience daily moral and ethical influence of all those around us.

---

<sup>1</sup> James B. Nelson, *Moral Nexus; Ethics of Christian Identity and Community* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 81.

<sup>2</sup> Michael B. Regele, *Death of the Church Mars Hill (Summer 1998)*

### **Conclusion Number One**

The first conclusion that may be taken from the narrative of this paper is that the church is not necessarily preaching a false truth, but that it does not inculcate that truth beyond the doors of the church. The question that has been attempted to answer is, “How can community pastors lead their congregations into collaborative efforts to restore the Christian influence among community families?”

### **Conclusion Number Two**

Conclusion number two is that the teachings of Scripture to the multitudes, as they may be handed down from generation to generation, are useful instruction for individuals, families, and churches toward developing a Christian moral influence. How Scripture provided moral and ethical education in the Old and New Testament Church. The moral and ethical influence as inculcated by Scripture, history of teaching in the church and the nature of the Christian person by virtue of their living out the Scripture and teaching. The Bible’s foundational authority has not changed in the church; however, the interpretation has changed to accommodate modern lifestyles. Christians can believe that the authority of Scripture has not changed and that it is not dependent upon the church to decide its authority. Scripture provides advice concerning how children should regard their parents: “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you” (Exod. 10:12). God’s moral imperative for Adam and Eve gave them the privilege and responsibility of caring for increased population (Gen. 1:26-28). Scripture is the first line of education for moral influence given to the Christian community in the Twenty-first century. John Drane, Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland states that,

In the Old Testament, correct behavior, like so many other things, was based on history . . . how can the facts of history tell you how to behave? As we read the messages of the great prophets and explore the teaching of the books of Law, the answer to the question soon emerges.<sup>3</sup>

God's intention appears in Genesis 12 when He establishes a new family from the existing Gentile, chaotic, and rebellious society. "God chose Abraham and his descendants through whom His holy purpose was preserved and multiplied, and God chose Abraham to leave his known world and go where He appointed him" (Gen. 12:1-3). The author of this dissertation believes that there remains a dual covenant, or at least a set of two companion covenants, that remain that require the invitation of the pagan world into the covenant relationship. In God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:-27) He clearly stated the purpose of what Abraham's side of keeping the covenant was. Abraham was to "be blameless." It was God's standard for man's attainment. Abraham was to live a righteous life before God. It was not an edict for Abraham to have complete moral perfection, but for him to live outside the covenant without blemish, whole, and upright. The New Testament reiterates the promise of the first covenant in that there can be eternal life (Heb. 9:17). And Jesus says to everyone that, "come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28).

The New Testament gospel and letters gave the early Christian community instructions for moral living in its historical context. God intends that these instructions be used across the ages for teaching His people inside so they can become models to those outside of Christendom.

The biblical narrative describes God's intention for family, and His intention remains. It is the Christian family's responsibility to be an example, and influence the

---

<sup>3</sup> John Drane, *Introducing The Old Testament* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990), 282.

community outside the church: “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us” (Titus 2:7, 8).

### **Conclusion Number Three**

The third conclusion that one may take from this paper is that the story of Christianity reflects the fact that the better the church engages its cultural context, the better it functions as an ethical and moral influence. Over the ages of American Church history one will find that the church has maintained its mission to be an ever present influence upon the family, the community, and the country. Recent history relates that the effort has not changed. The climate in America in the nineteenth century was one in which a moral outlook prevailed in all areas of society. Moral reform in American Protestantism in the nineteenth and twentieth century’s shaped the way people thought about family, church, and the workplace. Each preceding century offered something to the new century and left room for change in terms of more or less religious control over the parishioner. Glenn Daman of Center for Leadership Development writes,

The church is not merely called upon to exist within the community at large, being isolated from it and having no impact upon it. When Christ states that the will of God is not to remove the church from the world but to protect it from the negative influences of the world, he clarifies our role (John 17:15). We are to be a visible and real presence within the community. While the church community has long wrestled with how we are to influence society at large, there is little question that we are to have an influence. In a number of places within the New Testament the writers draw attention to the fact that we have a responsibility to those outside the church. We are not merely to enter the secular world to do financial business and earn a living and then retreat into the church community for "spiritual work." Within the pages of Scripture there is not the dichotomy between the “secular”

and the "sacred." Rather we are to enter the secular community in order to engage it.<sup>4</sup>

Mark Noll is a historian specializing in the history of Christianity in the United States. He holds the position of Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. He writes,

The drive to renovate society, which had loomed so large with the antebellum revivalists, continued as a potent force in American life at least through the First World War. Most Protestant reformers maintained that the key to changing society lay in converting individuals, who would then reorder their private lives.<sup>5</sup>

Martin Marty, Professor Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity in the Divinity School, says that, "The Christian worldview in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw religious and ethical practices as inseparable."<sup>6</sup>

As a result of the above mentioned worldview, we can conclude that although seen as a move away from the Christian moral and ethical standards due to increasing interest in the analyses of popular culture and the role that religion plays for present and future generations, the mode of presenting the gospel meets the need of each new generation contextually and maintains the integrity of the Scripture. However, as discussed in Chapter Five the intent is primarily to maintain the Christian influence within the community while maintaining a contextual culture connection that does not dilute the Scripture.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.smallchurchleaders.org/the-country-shepherd/2005/02/transforming-our-community.html>. (accessed May 6, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Noll, *A History of Christianity*, 295.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire* (New York: Dial, 1970), 162, 179.

### Conclusion Number Four

The fourth conclusion that may be made is that there is an increased need to revisit and practice Christian moral and ethical influence to the non-Christian/non-churched community. The evidence for the need can be made by the fact that there is an increased moral decline within the families of our communities, even within the families of the church.

Dr. Glenn Daman, Director of Village Missions Center for Leadership

Development, writes on his blog,

The church always has had and will continue to have a significant impact upon the social, cultural and moral framework of any community, but this is especially true in rural society. Students of sociology point out that we do not inherit a specific culture or knowledge of cultural expectations. Rather through the process of socialization, we learn our culture and the expectations it places upon us. This socialization takes place within the social organizations closest to us—the family, school, and church. Other institutions, including community organizations such as civic groups or social clubs, play a lesser role.<sup>7</sup>

The five-year record shows there have been six youth suicides in Harney County, Oregon. This occurs often with indicators of un-treated mental health issues that stem from abuse by a parent, depression, and the loss of one or both parents to death, incarceration, suicide or divorce. A leading family expert in Jackson County Oregon, Gary McConeghy says that there is strong evidence for reduction of youth at risk where there is faith-based influence by the members of the faith based organizations.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.smallchurchleaders.org/the-country-shepherd/2005/02/transforming-our-community.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Gary McConeghy, PhD (personal interview, Josephine County, Oregon, 2003).

The individual church influence, coupled with that of other Christian churches in the community, and reinforced by the family is a key to promoting Christian moral influence upon all others with whom contact is made throughout the day. A child who is raised in a religious setting, no matter what the theology, learns to believe that life is lived out in a particular way. If the orthodoxy and orthopraxy is not consistent the child will seek other models that do not confuse the being.

Dr. Erik Erikson was an artist and a teacher in the late 1920's when he met Anna Freud, an Austrian psychoanalyst. With Anna's encouragement he began to study child psychoanalysis at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute. He taught at Yale University and Harvard University. He was interested in the influence of society and culture on child development, which led him to create the eight stages of psychosocial development theory. He wrote before his death in 1994, quoting Dr. George Boeree,

Dr. C. George Boeree, a retired professor, previously in the Psychology Department at Shippensburg University, where I taught personality theories and the history of psychology, states, In traditional societies (even our own only 50 or 100 years ago), a young man or woman looked up to his or her parents, relations, neighbors, and teachers. They were decent, hard-working people (most of them) and we wanted to be just like them...Unfortunately, most children today look to the mass media, especially T.V., for role models. It is easy to understand why: The people on T.V. are prettier, richer, smarter, wittier, healthier, and happier than anybody in our own neighborhoods!<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> C. George Boeree, "Personality Theories, Erik Erikson." Document online at: <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/erikson.html>. Accessed 16 January, 2006. Erikson also had some things to say about the interaction of generations, which he called *mutuality*. Freud had made it abundantly clear that a child's parents influence his or her development dramatically. Erikson pointed out that children influence their parents' development as well. The arrival of children, for example, into a couple's life, changes that life considerably, and moves the new parents along their developmental paths. It is even appropriate to add a third (and in some cases, a fourth) generation to the picture. Many of us have been influenced by our grandparents, and they by us.

### Conclusion Number Five

From Chapter Five we can reach a conclusion that as Christian communities (the churches and the families in the churches) we must strive to become recognized as different for our moral and ethical influence. We become so different that, the community in which we live becomes genuinely thankful for our church. And, that the community actually changes. “Through the blessings of the upright a city is exalted” (Prov. 11:11), because of the impact of the involvement of the church.

To become a Christian moral and ethical influence upon the community that is not Christian, we must put into motion the suggestions given in Chapter Five taken from Richard Foster, we must become intentionally Godward. Not self-oriented or success oriented, but God oriented. This means living in faith and through faith and by faith. This is about the power of the Holy Spirit winning people to Christ. We should be practicing the “habits of the heart” for biblical holiness using spiritual disciplines and by making certain that our Godward orientation is always for the sake of the world, and finally by engaging in vigorous, culture sensitive evangelism.<sup>10</sup>

As a Christian moral influence we must become active beyond our weekly “worship service,” and mid-week Bible studies and social gatherings. The Scripture says, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). And elsewhere in Scripture it is written, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The latter Scripture indicates that perhaps we

---

<sup>10</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline; The Path To Spiritual Growth*, (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1998), 175. The above is a paraphrased restatement of the noted source in chapter 5.



should begin in our own neighborhoods and communities rather than sign up with the local mission board to go to Africa.

### **Conclusion Number Six**

The final conclusion is that the author of this dissertation believes that it is easier to be a professing Christian than it is to be an active moral and ethical influence as a Christian. The reason is because it calls the individual and the church to openly live morally and ethically in all areas of their lives. The author also believes that Christian moral influence upon the community at large by the Christian faith community requires steadfast outreach, rather than complacently waiting for the community to come to the church. The church should make a strong attempt at being wholly contextualized in the twenty-first century, while remaining true to the Scripture. The implication is that the church and the individual must become wholly committed to God, Scripture and the community.

## WORKS CITED

- Audi, Robert. *Moral. Value and Human Diversity*, New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007.
- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973.
- Barna, George. The Barna Group, "Unchurched."  
<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=38>. (accessed June 18, 2008).
- Barna Group, "Christianity Is No Longer Americans' Default Faith,"  
<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/15-christianity-is-no-longer-americans-default-faith>. (accessed October 28, 2009).
- Berkowitz, Marvin W. and John H. Grych, Marquette University, Copyright 1988.  
<http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/articles/berkowitzfostering.html>. (accessed March 5, 2007).
- Billar, H.B. *Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development*, Westport: Auburn, 1993.
- Billar, H.B. & Trotter, R.J. *The Father Factor*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Boeree, Dr. C George. "Personality Theories, Erik Erikson"  
<http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/erikson.htm>. (accessed March 2006).
- Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001  
<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange>. (accessed October 31, 2009).
- Bradshaw, John. *Healing The Shame That Binds You*, Deerfield Beach, Florida: 1988.
- Brown, C. O. *The Public Schools and Their Foes*. (Dubuque, 1890).
- Brown, William P. *Character in Crisis*. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.
- "Burns, Oregon," <http://www.oregon.com/towns/burns/burns.cfm>. (accessed October 31, 2009).
- Cheeks, Lori. Personal interview with Juvenile Court counselor, Burns, Oregon. September 20, 2005.

- Collins, Jim. *Good To Great*, New York: Harper Collins, 2001.
- Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Coleman, James C. and William E. Broen Jr., *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972.
- Conroy, Maureen. *The Discerning Heart, Discovering a Personal God*. Chicago: Layola Press, 1993.
- Cramer, William Jr. Personal Interview, Burns, Oregon, September, 2007.
- Croucher, Rowland and others. *Modernity and Postmodernity*, May 30, 2003  
<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/1669.htm>. (accessed May 20, 2011).
- Curran, Charles E. *American Catholic Social Ethics*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.
- Drane, John. *Introducing The Old Testament*. New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990.
- Economic Time Series Page: Harney County, OR, Oregon; Percent; NSA,  
<http://www.economagic.com/em-cgi/data.exe/blsla/laucn41025003>.
- Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America 1776-1990*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline; The Path To Spiritual Growth*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1998.
- Foster, Richard. *Seven Steps Toward Renewal*. Reproduced by permission from Dr. Yonggi Cho's "Church Growth" magazine, <http://www.charismanews.com>.
- Gauld, Laura and Malcolm. *The Biggest Job We'll Ever Have; the Hyde School program for character – based education and parenting*, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Singapore: 2002.
- George Fox University Graduate Department of Counseling,  
<http://www.georgefox.edu/soe/counseling/values.html>. (accessed December 21, 2008).
- George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Fuller Seminary, Seattle Pacific University, Northwest Nazarene University, and many others offer Spiritual Formation curriculum for master's and doctorate programs.

<http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/trelww2.htm>. (accessed March 13, 2006).

Goldberg, Dr. Bruce. DHS Director January 6, 2006 DHS Director's Message. <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/news/messages/message.shtml>. (accessed January 7, 2006).

Gooch, John O. *John Wesley For the Twenty First Century*, Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2006.

Greathouse, Dr. Lowell. First United Methodist Church, Portland, Oregon. Telephone interview by the author. December 12, 2007.

Greer, Robert C. *Mapping Postmodernism; a Survey of Christian Options*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003, is quoting Allen bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987.

Grenz, S. J., *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Guder, Darrell L. ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998.

Hammett, John S., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, "An Ecclesiological assessment of the Emerging Church Movement," <http://ateam.blogware.com/AnEcclesiologicalAssessment.Hammett.pdf>. (accessed April 8, 2008).

Handy, Robert. *A Christian America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Harkness, Georgia. *Christian Ethics*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958.

Harney County Church Attendance Record Keepers, Interview by the Author, December 2007.

Hoffman, M.L. "Father Absence And Conscience Development", *Child Development*. 1975. Hoffman, M.L. "The Role Of The Father In Moral Internalization," *The Role Of The Father In Child Development*, 2nd ed., 1981.

Hoodenpyl, Dean. Personal interview, May 13, 2008.

"Is A Bad Economy Good For Church Attendance?" *The Pew Forum On Religion And Public Life* (March 12, 2009), <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=405>.

- “Juvenile Justice FYI, Information On Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Crime Statistics,” [http://www.juvenilejusticefyi.com/juvenile\\_crimes.html](http://www.juvenilejusticefyi.com/juvenile_crimes.html) (accessed April 23, 2006).
- Keeling, M. *The Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology Of The New Testament: Revised Edition*. Grand Rapids, William b. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.
- Lewis, Robert with Rob Wilkins. *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2001.
- Manahan, Dr. Ronald E. “The Church And Education In The Twentieth Century,” <http://www.ifca.org/voice/99Nov-Dec/manahan.htm>. (accessed on December 9, 2006).
- Matera, Frank J. *New Testament Ethics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.
- Marty, Martin E. “Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America” (New York: Dial, 1970); second edition issued as *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire*. New York: Scribner, 1986.
- McConeghy, Gary Ph.D. Josephine County, Personal interview, 2003.
- Mehl, Ron, *The Tender Commandments*, Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1998.
- Merrill, David. “The Uncool Church: Reaching out to the Rejected of our Society.” [URL:http://www.tiu.edu/cm/seniors03/merrill.pdf](http://www.tiu.edu/cm/seniors03/merrill.pdf). Copyright 2003. TIU/Trinity College Christian Ministries Dept. James W. Mohler, Ph.D. (accessed, April 22, 2006).
- Messer, Donald E. *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Mischel, W. “Father Absence And Delay Of gratification,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. 1961.
- Mittleberg, Mark, Lee Strobel, and Bill Hybels. *Becoming A Contagious Christian, Participant’s Guide*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Morse, MaryKate. *Making Room For Leadership; Power, Space and Influence*, Downers Grove, Il: IVP Books, 2008.

- Murray, Stuart. "Post-Christendom, Post-Christian...does the label matter?"  
<http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/book/export/html/506>, (accessed April 18, 2011).
- *Post-Christendom*, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks, UK and Waynesboro, GA.: Paternoster Press, 2005.
- Nelson, James B. "Moral Nexus; Ethics of Christian Identity and Community."  
 Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- Noll, Mark A. *A History of Christianity In the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.
- Nucci, Larry. "Moral Development and Character Formation." *Psychology and Educational Practice*, Berkeley: MacCarchan. P.127-157. 1997.  
<http://tigger.uic.edu/~lnucci/MoralEd/articles/nuccimoraldev.htm>, (accessed January 11, 2006).
- O'Keeffe, Bernadette. "A Look at the Christian Schools Movement," in *Priorities in Religious Education: A Model for the 1990s and Beyond*, ed. Brenda Watson [book on-line] (London: Falmer Press, 1992, accessed 12 January 2007), 94; available from Questia, <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=109120716>.
- Oregon Health Division, Department of Human Services, *Youth Risk Behavior Survey: 1999 YRBS, Youth Suicide Results*, Oregon Health Trends Center for Health Statistics, August 2000.
- O'Rielly, Bill *Culture Warriors*, Title page. 2008.
- Phone Book, Steens County*, Yellow Pages Church Listings, 2008 ed. "Gateway to the Steens," Harney County Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.harneycounty.com/LilRedCone/History.htm>, (accessed March 17, 2008).
- Pruett, Kyle. M.D. *The Nurturing Father*. New York: Warner Books, 1987.
- Quinn, Robert E. *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
- Regele, Michael B. *Death of the Church Mars Hill* (Summer 1998).
- Rorty, Richard. *The Postmodern Rejection of Absolute Truth*  
<http://www.leaderu.com/aip/docs/geuras.html>. (accessed April 19, 2011).
- Roxburgh, Alan J. and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church To Reach A Changing World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

- Ruse, Michael and Christopher A. Pynes, eds. *The Stem Cell Controversy: Debating the Issues*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2003.
- Schwarz Christian A., and Christopher Schalk. *Natural Church Development*, St. Charles, Illinois: Church Smart Resources, 1998.
- State & County QuickFacts, U.S. Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/41025.html>. (accessed October 31, 2009).
- Timko, Christie. Personal interview, Canyon City Oregon, December 26, 2006.
- Sherman, Amy "The Church as Community Asset," keynote address, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee National Conference, March 2000.
- Sine, Tom. *Mustard Seed Versus McWorld; Reinventing Life and Faith for the Future*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999.
- Smerski, Colleen. Child Welfare Caseworker. Interview December, 2005, DHS offices Burns, Oregon
- Spence, Dr. O. Talmadge and Dr. H. T. Spence. *Statements for Scriptural Separation*. Foundations Bible College, [http://www-foundations.edu/about\\_fbc/scriptural\\_separation.htm](http://www-foundations.edu/about_fbc/scriptural_separation.htm), (accessed April 20, 2008).
- Stafford, Tim. *Never Mind The Joneses*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2004.
- Sweet, Leonard *Summoned to Lead*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2004.
- Tentler, Leslie. "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History," 1993 essay. Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University Of Notre Dame with support from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. and the University of Notre Dame. <http://www.nd.edu/~cushwa/20thCentury.htm>, (accessed February 1, 2007).
- The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (March 12, 2009), <http://www.pewforum.org/docs/? DocID=405>
- Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995.
- U.S. Census Bureau News, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington D.C [http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income\\_wealth/005647.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html). (accessed January 7, 2006).

- Waters-Boots, Shelley. Beyond Latchkey Kids. <http://www.newamerica.net/node/7707>. (accessed June 15, 2011).
- Wax, Trevin. copyright © 2008 Kingdom People Blog. <http://trevinwax.com/2008/02/05/5-reasons-why-the-emerging-church-is-now-receding/>. (accessed, April 8, 2008).
- Webster, William. "The Authority of the Scripture," Christian Resources, Inc., <http://www.christiantruth.com> (accessed, August 24, 2008).
- Weigle, George. John Paul II and The Crisis of Humanism. *First Things First, The Journal of Religion, Culture and Public Life*, Copyright (c) 1999 First Things 98 (December 1999).
- Wells, David F. *God in the Wasteland; The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.
- . *Losing Our Virtue; Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.
- Wheeler, Dr. David. Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Portland, OR. Telephone interview by author. November 18, 2007. And church website at, <http://www.fbc-portland.org/Ministries.aspx?ContentID=38>. (accessed November 20,2007).
- White, Ellen G. "An Appeal To Mothers," 1864, <http://www.ellenwhite.org/appeal.htm>, (accessed, February 11, 2005).
- Wicker, Christine. *The Fall of the Evangelical Nation: The Surprising Crisis Inside the Church*. New York: Harper One, 2008.
- Zimmer, Carl. *Children Learn by Monkey See Monkey Do*. New York: New York Times, December 13, 2005.