

Cultural Transformation and The Bible

By Dave DeWitt

Thesis: One of the mega-movements of the 21st century is the promotion of cultural change on a global level. Of course, culture is a moving stream, always changing. But the new movements are purposefully attempting to shape that change. Liberal progressives often call their movement “social justice.”

“Social justice may be broadly understood as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth.” [A United Nations definition, according to sdfoundation.org]

Many Christian organizations have responded by calling believers to be involved in “redeeming” or “transforming” the world’s cultures toward Christian values, starting with the culture in which they live. I will use the term “Transformationalism,” to identify the Christian movement, since it’s a common term in the literature. The reason I put Christian “Transformationalism” in the same category with secular “social justice” is because they both have the goal of transforming the cultures of the world, albeit in opposite directions. For example, Transformationalism would say Christians living in America should be involved in transforming American culture to favor things like the traditional family, heterosexual marriage, and protecting the rights of the unborn.

It is not my purpose here to discuss the secular (liberal or conservative) ideas of social justice. My concern is only about the Christian form of it. The danger is that Christians are being deceived by the leadership of this movement. The leaders have changed the definition of the gospel, with the result that believers are wasting precious time involving themselves in futile cultural projects. I shall develop a position that the Bible does not teach cultural involvement. Therefore, Transformationalism, redeeming the earth’s cultures, is not a biblical idea.

Defining Transformationalism

Here is the definition, according to Canadian Pastor and Reformed Theologian Tim Challies:

The transformationalist emphasis refers to the way Christians relate to the world and to the culture around us. It seeks to avoid isolationism, but to impact the culture in ways consistent with Christian doctrine and piety.

[Underline mine, May 25, 2005, <https://www.challies.com/articles/putting-god-in-a-box-transformationalism>]

John Stonestreet, President of “the Colson Center for Christian World View” claims:

There has been incredible transformation in many aspects of our culture. For example, there are far more Christian academics in prominent positions than when Chuck and Nancy [Colson] wrote in 1999. That’s good news. Also, global abject poverty has been cut in more than half in the last 30 years, and a big part of that has been the application of Christian notions of work, dignity, and the role of the state. That’s good news too. Christian filmmaking is better than it used to be, and there are many involved in the arts. The pro-life movement is having amazing cultural success.

[Underline mine, Stonestreet quotes from interview with thebestschools.org]

But Stonestreet’s list is problematic. True, pro-life objectives are biblical, but Stonestreet has to be very selective to cherry-pick his few and limited “good news” events. To conclude “There has been incredible transformation in many aspects of our culture” seems agenda-driven, not an assessment of what is actually, obviously, globally going on in the culture. There are far more examples of the church moving toward *apostasy* (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the world’s cultures following *the god of this world* (2 Corinthians 4:4) toward the antichrist’s *great tribulation* (Revelation 7:14) as:

- Prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 13:10; 24:23; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15f; Amos 5:20; 8:9; Zephaniah 1:15; Daniel 7:25; 8:25; 11:36; 12:1; Joel 2:2)
- Predicted by the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8; 1 Timothy 4:1)
- Confirmed by Jesus (Matthew 24:15-29)
- Described in Revelation 6–18

According to the biblical definition of good and evil, the individual acts of people globally are becoming more evil. Consider sexual (LGBTQ) perversion, pornography, feminism, the destruction of the family, lying, and blasphemy (there is hardly a conversation without “trash talk” or “casual blasphemy”). True, the sin nature of man remains the same (Romans 3:10-18). But in the 21st century:

- The percent (not just the number) of most evil acts is greater
- The tolerance of evil is greater
- The opportunity for committing evil is greater
- The condemnation of those who do not promote evil is greater

For example, the Bible calls homosexuality sinful: *an abomination*, a *degrading passion*, and *ungodly* (Leviticus 18:22; Deuteronomy 22:5; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:10). Suppose you could go to a small village in Europe in the 1500s and ask whoever you met on the street if homosexuality is wrong. Almost all would say it’s wrong. Then suppose you could go to that same village today with the same question. Almost none of them would say it is wrong. In America, you would likely be condemned for “hate speech” unless you said it was not wrong.

Transformationalism Is the “New Evangelicalism”

Harold Ockenga (1905-1985), first President of Fuller Theological Seminary, is one of the fathers of what has become today’s transformational Christianity. He called it “New Evangelicalism” and said it differs from Fundamentalism

... in its willingness to handle the social problems which the Fundamentalists evaded.... There needs be no disagreement between the personal gospel and the social gospel.

[Harold J. Ockenga, “Press Release on ‘The New Evangelicalism,’” in *Be Ye Holy: The Call to Christian Separation*, by Fred Moritz (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 117–18.]

There should be no doubt that the Christianity of many godly missionaries has had a positive moral impact on the cultures where they ministered the gospel. There should be no doubt that the Bible consistently exhorts believers to care for widows, orphans, the poor and needy. There should be no doubt that we are to create a biblical culture in our families, our extended families, and our Christian organizations. **But** where is the biblical mandate to impact secular culture?

In the Old Testament, attempting to impact the world’s culture was never an assignment from God. *Enoch walked with God* (Genesis 5:24), and Noah *found grace in the eyes of the Lord* (Genesis 6:8), but neither were told to change their pre-flood culture. Abraham was never told to impact the culture of the Canaanites. Joseph was never told to impact the culture of Egypt, even when he was in a position of authority. Neither Moses nor Joshua were told to transform the cultures of the *Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites* (Exodus 23:23). David was given no directive from God to impact the culture of the Philistines. Daniel was given no directive to make culture changes for Babylon. Nehemiah was not told to suggest culture changes for the Persians.

The New Testament gives no example, command, or suggestion for transforming the culture of the Greeks or Romans, say, away from their cruel slavery, homosexual and heterosexual temple cult prostitution, or polytheism. Paul said believers were to be *...making the most of your time, because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:16), not attempting to change the culture so the days are less evil. He told Timothy to *Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called* (1 Timothy 6:12). Cultural change is not about *eternal life*—it’s the wrong fight.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God’s people were commanded to *love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19). But nowhere in the Bible was that understood as an exhortation for believers to influence the cultures of the world that surrounded them. If God wanted His people to redeem the cultures of the world, you would think He would have mentioned it to somebody.

Transformationalism Defines the Gospel as the So-called "Cultural Mandate"

Christian Transformationalists call Genesis 1:28 "The Cultural Mandate."

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

They claim this is a mandate for believers to redeem the physical and cultural structures of the world. As Greg Beale (professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary) said,

"The Cultural Mandate is the first Great Commission." [May 12, 2017 (thegospelcoalition.org)]

But Genesis 1:28 is not a "cultural mandate." It has nothing to do with culture at all. This command was given in the Garden of Eden, before the Fall. If Genesis 1:28 is about all humans, then it is a command to subdue and rule over the physical creation of plants and animals. For example, we should manage the wolf and deer population, not kill all the whales, or cut down all the trees without replacing them. But plants and animals don't have culture. Only humans have that. Genesis 1:28 is a mandate to *rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth*, not to redeem human culture. There is nothing cultural about the (so called) "cultural mandate." If God meant for Genesis 1:28 to be understood as a cultural mandate, you would think He would require His patriarchs, prophets, or apostles to pursue it. But it is never mentioned.

Don't miss the significance of this. These people are not defining the gospel as getting lost sinners saved through the blood of Christ and going to heaven. The more conservative ones would include the salvation of sinners as part of redeeming the earth. But they understand the gospel to be restoring the earth to its pre-fall, Garden of Eden, condition. On November 21, 2019, I was in a group where John Stonestreet (referenced above) was speaking. During a time of questioning, someone asked him, "How do you define the gospel?" His answer was about God redeeming the earth. I spoke up and said, "and Peter said *the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up*. Right?" Stonestreet answered, "Well, people have different interpretations of that passage." I thought (but didn't say), "Yeah, how about the interpretation that says *the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up*?"

Rev. Michael J. Glodo of Reformed Theological Seminary put it this way:

God gave humanity the cultural mandate in the most simple terms so that the world, the creation would be filled with his glory. We see a picture of creation as being something like the construction of a house, sort of like an ancient temple. And when a temple is built, the god who commissioned its building inhabits it. And so, the biblical view of creation is that the whole earth was made to be a dwelling place for God, to be a holy sanctuary.

[<http://reformedanswers.org/answer.asp/file/44453>]

But the Apostle Paul said it's the individual believer who is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), not this world. Peter said, *the earth and its works will be burned up* (2 Peter 3:10), not rebuilt into a temple which God "inhabits." John's revelation was that *the first earth passed away* (Revelation 21:1), it was not something "made to be a dwelling place for God." Instead of following the clear teaching of the apostles, Transformationalists choose to believe this earth, transformed into its pre-fall, Garden of Eden condition, is our final dwelling place. As the title of Michael Witmer's (2004) book says, "Heaven Is a Place on Earth."

Don't miss the significance. That's how they understand the gospel.

Theologically, Transformationalism Is a Return to Postmillennialism

A common thread among most redeem-the-culture Transformationalists, is that they ignore prophecy. They rarely talk about the end times or the end of the earth, or even going to heaven. There are three basic

ways of looking at the future that have been developed by Christians over the centuries. In chronological order of their development, there was premillennialism, then amillennialism, then postmillennialism.

First, prominent during the first two centuries, was the idea that Jesus would come back before (pre-) His kingdom would be established. **Premillennialism** takes the Bible literally, meaning, at face value. Everyone who does that understands it to say the cultures of the world will get worse (apostasy in the church and an antichrist's global tribulation) before Christ's Second Coming. At His Second Coming Christ, not the church, will bring about His 1000-year reign on earth.

Second, during the third century, the church in North Africa developed **Amillennialism**, which abandoned a literal view of prophecy. This became the view of the western church under Augustine (354-430) and was resurrected to Protestantism by John Calvin (1509-1564). Amillennialism teaches the idea that the kingdom of God is in the hearts of believers, and after the gospel is spread over most of the world (although not converting everyone), Christ will return to set up His kingdom on earth (or, some would say to take believers to heaven).

Third, about a hundred years after the Reformation (beginning in the 1600s, though some would say earlier), some church fathers developed a culturally more optimistic view of the future. Like Amillennialism, **Postmillennialism** abandoned a literal view of prophecy, but unlike Amillennialism, it saw the church as spreading its influence to the cultures of the world, producing global peace, after which Christ returns to a kingdom already set up on earth.

Postmillennialism was prominent through WWI, which was supposed to be the war to end all wars. Then came WWII, the Korean War, and Viet Nam, causing Postmillennialism to almost disappear from Christian theology. But, amazingly, the non-literal aspects of 21st century Christianity are experiencing a return to Postmillennialism. Actually, Amillennialism, with its emphasis on the kingdom of God being a spiritual thing within the hearts of believers, is declining. Now the big push is to get involved, redeeming the culture, improving the world, transforming it into God's kingdom on earth, after which (post-) He will return.

But only Premillennialism comes from a study and application of the Bible. The other two were developed as a response to what was going on in the culture. And Premillennialists consistently discourage Christian involvement in redeeming the world's cultures. Let's hear from some prominent premillennial scholars.

Dave Hunt, "In fact, dominion—taking dominion and setting up the kingdom for Christ—is an impossibility, even for God. The millennial reign for Christ, far from being the kingdom, is actually the final proof of the incorrigible nature of the human heart, because Christ Himself can't do what these people say they are going to do. . . ." [Dave Hunt, "Dominion and the Cross," Tape 2 of "Dominion: The World and New World Order" (1987) published by Omega Letter, Ontario, Canada. cf. Dave Hunt, *Beyond Seduction: A Return to Biblical Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1987) 250.]

Harold Hoehner, "I just can't buy their [postmillennialists'] basic presupposition that we can do anything significant to change the world. And you can waste an awful lot of time trying." [Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary, "Is Christ or Satan Ruler of this World?," *Christianity Today*, 43.]

Hal Lindsey, "God sent us to be fishers of men, not to clean up the fish bowl." [Quoted by Dr. Kenneth Gentry in forward to Joseph R. Balyeat, *Babylon*, 8.]

J. Vernon McGee, "You don't polish brass on a sinking ship." [ibid.]

John F. Walvoord, "The present age is one in which the gospel is preached to all the world. Relatively few are saved. The world becomes, in fact, increasingly wicked as the age progresses. The premillennial view...presents no commands to improve society as a whole." [John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), 134.]

Tommy Ice, "We will never be able to redeem society." [H. Wayne House and Tommy Ice, *Dominion Theology: Curse or Blessing* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988), 130.]

Charles Ryrie, “The commission to the church is to preach good news and to teach the Word, not to effect worldwide justice.” [Ryrie, *The Christian and Social Responsibility*, 19.]

Transformationalism Is about Bringing in the Kingdom of God

Today’s Christian Transformationalism (theologically Postmillennialism) understands the phrase in the Lord’s prayer, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10) as a directive for us to bring in the Kingdom of God *on earth*.

Albert Wolters, professor of religion at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, argues, Mankind, as God’s representatives on earth, carry on where God left off ... [leading to] a new heaven and a new earth. [Wolters, *Creation Regained*, pp 41, 48.]

But the phrase *your kingdom come* (Matthew 6:10) in the Lord’s Prayer is something we ask God to do, not something He is asking us to do. God’s kingdom is all about what God is doing, not what we are doing. For example, Jesus told Peter, *I will build My church* (Matthew 16:18). Building His church is something He is doing, not something we are to attempt to do as we “carry on where God left off.” Our assignment is to *make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:19), not to be kingdom builders.

The Consequences of Transformationalism in Christian Missions

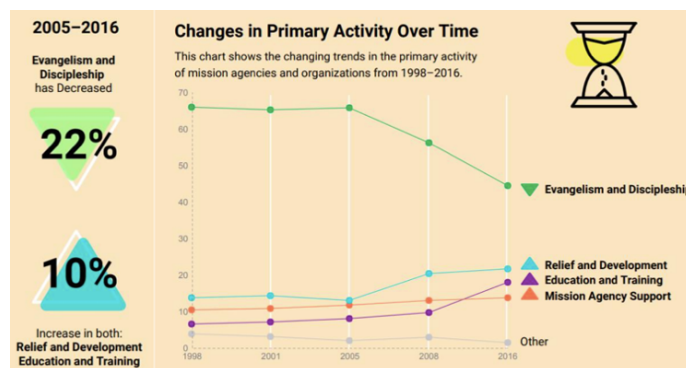
Transformationalism in missions is sometimes called “Integral Missions” or “Presence Missions” rather than just “Proclamation Missions.” This emphasis is producing missionaries and mission movements that include socio-economic improvement as a central aspect of their ministry.

But when missions take on social issues, they give up their unique impact. The whole world is full of groups trying to transform culture. Muslims, Hindus, liberals, conservatives, progressives, traditionalists, globalists, nationalists, and environmentalists all want to transform the culture and fix the earth. Only the New Testament *ἐκκλησία* (*ecclesia*) proclaimed a gospel of redemption from sin through the blood of Christ. When the church takes on the world’s issues, it begins to look like the world (John 17:9-20). As McClain points out,

The identification of the kingdom with the church has led historically to ecclesiastical policies and programs which . . . have been far removed from the original simplicity of the New Testament *ekklesia* . . . Thus the church loses its “pilgrim” character and the sharp edge of its divinely commissioned “witness” is blunted. It becomes an *ekklesia* which is not only in the world, but also *of* the world. [McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, 438–39.]

The Missio Nexus [Future Missions] organization claims that adding only 10% “relief and development education and training,” has been accompanied by a reduction in” evangelism and discipleship” by 22%. Here is their report.

First, the shift begins in 2005.... Second, the shift is away from *evangelism/discipleship* and towards *education/training*, and *relief/development*. Third, this trend has not levelled off, at least through 2016. If this trend continues, it portends a tremendous decline in missionary efforts to proclaim the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches. [Missio Nexus. *Missiographics*, “Primary Activities of Mission Agencies-USA and Canada,” 2017, brackets mine.]



What has generally happened, most of the time, as the church has increasingly focused itself on transforming the culture, is not that the culture is transformed

into biblical righteousness. Rather, it's the church that is usually transformed into the world's unrighteousness. As Andy Crouch has astutely observed,

The rise of interest in cultural transformation has been accompanied by a rise in cultural transformation of a different sort—the transformation of the church into the culture's image.”
[Crouch, *Culture Making*, 189.]

Did Jesus Ever Make Anyone Less Poor?

I can find no one who, because of an encounter with Jesus, became less poor. When Jesus healed people, they were less sick, with the idea that they stayed less sick. But when Jesus dealt with people concerning their material possessions, they did not get less poor. There are a few instances, such as the one we call the rich young ruler, where Jesus advised him to *sell all you possess and give to the poor* (Mark 10:21). But that only would have made the rich young ruler more poor, and it would only have given temporary relief to some poor. Relief efforts, though valuable, do nothing to change the culture of the poor.

Jesus was Himself materially poor. He said, “*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head*” (Matthew 8:20). He said, “*blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God*” (Luke 6:20). When John the Baptist asked Jesus if He was indeed the Messiah, one of the evidences Jesus gave was *the poor have the gospel preached to them* (Luke 7:22 from Isaiah 61:1). He did not say “abject poverty has been cut in more than half” or even that the poor are less poor. When Jesus gave the account of the *poor man named Lazarus*, Lazarus remained poor until after his death (Luke 16:19ff). When Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume, Judas complained that this could have helped the poor. But Jesus said, “*you always have the poor with you, you do not always have Me*” (John 12:8). Transformationalism, it seems, would have to agree with Judas, rather than Jesus.

Did the Apostles Ever Attempt to Change the Culture?

As with Jesus, the New Testament gives us no example of the apostles involved in or suggesting any church be involved in changing the world's cultures. As Paul was awaiting execution in Rome, he told his disciple Timothy,

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Timothy's ministry was to be about discipling faithful men, not cultural change. Then Paul compared ministry to suffering the hardship of a soldier and added,

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier (2 Timothy 2:2-4).

The ministry pattern that Paul left for Timothy to model was speaking out boldly for the resurrection of Christ: in synagogues where there was one, at a place of prayer beside the river in Philippi, at a place designated for public addresses in Athens, publicly and from house-to-house in Ephesus, and from his own rented quarters in Rome. He did not entangle himself in the social, cultural, or political *affairs of everyday life*. For example,

In Thessalonica, Paul

... went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ” (Acts 17:2-3).

In Athens, Paul spoke of the true God, saying,

He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

In Rome, Paul was

... trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening (Acts 28:23).

The Apostle Peter's message was

to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

The Apostle John's message was

... if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

At no time did the apostles Peter, Paul, or John say anything about a cultural mandate, redeeming the culture, restoring creation, fixing the planet, or initiating programs "to impact the culture in ways consistent with Christian doctrine and piety." Both the Greek and Roman cultures were filled with slavery, idolatry, fornication, lying philosophers, and corrupt politicians. But the apostles only *reasoned from the Scriptures* about Jesus being the Christ. They taught truth and combated false teaching in the church but never suggested they should even attempt to influence the Greek or Roman culture.

The apostles were indeed concerned and involved in helping other believers who were poor. Paul was sensitive to needy Christian widows in Ephesus (1 Timothy 5:3-16), but he made no attempt to make the general Ephesians culture more sensitive to widows. He organized a gift to the church in Jerusalem because of a famine (Romans 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 5:3-16). But he made no attempt to impact, improve, or eradicate poverty in the city of Jerusalem.

The apostles were sensitive to the poor people they encountered as they presented the gospel. For example, when Peter and John encountered a lame man begging for money at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, Peter said,

I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk! (Acts 3:6).

When the leaders in Jerusalem sent Paul and Barnabas out to do evangelism among the Gentiles, Paul reported,

They only asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do (Galatians 2:10).

The Lord's half-brother James wrote,

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27).

Notice, James is talking about visiting orphans and widows, not changing the culture to help them. Of course, *to visit* includes the idea of personal financial care, but many orphans and widows would rather have a visit than a gift. And James addressed this to *my brethren* eight times (James 1:2; 2:1; 2:14; 3:1; 3:10; 3:12; 5:12; 5:19). James never suggested any of his Christian brethren get involved in a cultural mandate, social justice transformation, restoring creation, fixing the planet, or initiating programs "to impact the culture in ways consistent with Christian doctrine and piety."

Additional Problems with Transformationalism

- Knowing the culture can be valuable for communicating the gospel. But the Christian Transformationalists have changed the focus of the gospel from the plan of salvation to redeeming the earth. And most of them believe this earth, not heaven, is our eternal home. But Hebrews 11:13 tells us the Old Testament saints *were strangers and exiles on the earth*. Peter also referred to the church as *aliens and strangers* on this earth (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11). Paul told the Philippians *our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ* (Philippians 3:20).
- What about the historical examples where the church did control the culture? For example, what about Constantine's Rome, the Roman Catholic cultural control in the Middle Ages, the Eastern Orthodox attempt to control the cultures of Greece, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and the Ukraine. Didn't black slavery come to England while the Anglican Church attempted to control the culture?

How about the Crusades, the Inquisition of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the Salem witch hunts? Weren't they Christian attempts to control the culture?

- It's the Holy Spirit who *will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment*, not the culture. The sin nature cannot be controlled by cultural change (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21, 22; Romans 7:11; Ephesians 4:22). Moral change comes about by the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), and unbelievers in the world's cultures don't have that.
- Actually, evangelism, discipleship, the spread of the gospel, and believers loving one another, seems to increase when believers are persecuted, not when they are attempting to control the culture. Paul said, *For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake* (Philippians 1:29).
- The apostles told us to *be in subjection to governing authorities* (Romans 13:1), and *submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution* (1 Peter 2:13), not to change them.
- Can Christians agree on what it means to transform the culture? It's easy for John Stonestreet to call it "good news" that "the pro-life movement is having amazing cultural success." What about the churches that accept woman pastors, LGBTQ believers, Mariology, divorce and remarriage, cohabitation, and removing the Bible as the foundation of Christianity? What exactly does it mean "to impact the culture in ways consistent with Christian doctrine and piety?" What Christian doctrine? Which Christian definition of piety?

Conclusion

The first part of the 21st century has seen an emphasis in Christian missions which has changed the gospel message from a plan of salvation, to a plan of redeeming all of creation to its Garden of Eden condition. This (postmillennial) idea comes from culture study, not Bible study. There is no command, example, or suggestion anywhere in the Bible that believers should make changing the world's culture an objective. Transformationalism has changed the gospel, blunted the impact of missions, and has taken Christians away from entrusting the Word of God to faithful people who will be somewhere forever, into being involved in the affairs of this world, which will pass away.