

Are we leading a 21st century church with a 20th century mentality?

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It could be stated that principles that are natural, have supernatural origins. Stephen R. Covey recently wrote a book called, "The 8th Habit." In this book he describes a tension that our culture is presently experiencing. He calls it the transition from an Industrial Age mindset (the 20th century model) to a Knowledge Worker Age mindset (the 21st century model). The Industrial Age accomplished production through building factories, and learning specialization, delegation, and scalability, therefore humanity falls in love with technology over humanity. The Knowledge Worker Age promotes true results through investing not as much in "objects", but in an organization's people.

Covey's biggest complaint is that we "live in a Knowledge Worker Society but operate our organizations in a controlling Industrial Age model that suppresses the release of human potential. He states the in the Industrial Age" the main assets and primary drivers of economic prosperity were machines and capital — things. People were necessary, but replaceable. All you really need is a "person's body, and you really do not want their mind, heart or spirit," for that would complicate things. People are expenses that must be controlled through fear and punishment, and object are assets worthy of investment. All of this leads to manipulation, and has a definite effect upon morale.

While Covey is giving a directive for the natural, there are some supernatural implications. Are we trying to lead a 21st century church with a 20th century mentality? If the most important barometer for success is directly connected to a thing, or a building, more land, or more buses, then we may

be living in the wrong century. All of these things may be necessary for success, but may also contain some pretty unbiblical motives.

Many have heard or read Ephesians 4:11-13 when it says, "11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (KJV) Paul is saying that people are not merely pawns to be used to pay for buildings—they are a vital part of the realization of Apostolic revival. The churches job is to equip people to fulfill the work of God. It is tempting to put our trust in things—for they show tangible results, but more eternal results rely in true discipleship. While equipping people is much more difficult to control (buildings do not have opinions), it is the only effective model for the 21st century. It would be ludicrous for someone to think that this is treatise against beautiful buildings and technology. Let us hope that we are able to keep them in their proper place.

The priority of the first century church is critical for success in the postmodern world. We must invest in people and use our buildings as secondary motives to fulfill the great commission. Besides, brick and mortar have boundaries, but there are no boundaries when the body of Christ is unleashed to fulfill her mission. ★

— Nathaniel Binion
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Covey, Stephen R., "The 8th Habit", Free Press: New York, (2004), pp. 13-16. Ibid., pp. 13-16.