

What is the Culture of the Kingdom of God?

(Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness - Matthew 6:33)

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Our Citizenship is in Heaven - Philippians 3:20

Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Hebrews 13:14
 Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God. Hebrews 11:10
 (Therefore our culture is the culture of Heaven)
 (Our "passport" is issued in Heaven)
 (One day we are going home)

Made alive together with Christ....and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ – Ephesians 2:5, 6

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God – Galatians 2:20

If you then be raised with Christ **seek those things which are above** – Colossians 3:1a

Where Christ sits at the right hand of God – Colossians 3:1b

Set Your Mind on Things Above, not on Things on the Earth – Colossians 3:2

Your Life is hid with Christ in God – Colossians 3:3

Christ is our life – Colossians 3:4

(Therefore Jesus is the CENTRE of our lives)

Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be **conformed to the Image of His Son** – Romans 8:29

If any Person is in Christ, He is a new Creation, Old Things Have Passed Away,
 Behold, **all Things have Become New** – 2Corinthians 5:17

As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God. Romans 8:14

Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Galatians 5:16

What is Culture ?

The characteristics of the Lifestyle of an Ethnic Group of People include:

Their Arts, Their Social Behaviour

Their Attitudes, Their Customs

The Beliefs they Hold, The Rituals they Perform

The Clothes they Wear, The Food they Eat

The Crops they Grow, The Houses they Live in

The Games they Play, The Dances they Perform

Their Mode of Transport, Their Marriage Ceremonies

Their Manner of Family Life and Raising Children, The Way they Conduct Funerals and Burials

Each distinct Ethnic Group, has a particular Culture or Way of Doing Life on this Earth, which distinguishes them from other groups.

As Believers We Live Our Life within the Flow of Culture We are born into.

BUT

is it possible for the Culture of an Ethnic Group to hinder us fulfilling the will of God?

Cornelius was a Gentile, (a non-Jew), and an angel of the God instructed him to invite Peter, (a Jew), to his house to tell him what he must do. Acts 10:1-6

At the same time Peter received a vision from God, which told him that he was not to call any person unclean. Up to this point Jews considered Gentiles as unclean. Acts 10:9-22

So Peter travelled and entered the house of Cornelius and said to him, "You know that it is unlawful for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile and eat with them, but God has shown me not to call anyone unclean."

Acts 10:23-28, Acts 11:1-18

Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his household, and they were all saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and water baptized. Acts 10:29-48. Uncircumcised Gentiles!

The law that Peter was referring to in Verse 28, of Acts chapter 10, (Acts 11:2,3,) about it being unlawful for a Jew to enter a Gentile house or to eat with a Gentile, was "Not made so by the law of God, but by the decree of their wise men, which they looked upon as no less binding." (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Jewish tradition prevented the Gospel from being preached to the Gentiles for many years.

Cultural traditions have a very strong influence on our "world view."

God had to break through powerful religious tradition to release the Church to fulfil the "Great Commission."
Matthew 28:18-20

For a believer in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female: you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

When we put on the New Man, (of Christ), which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:10,11
("Scythian", of all Barbarians more so)

Speaking of his former life as a Pharisee, Paul said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Philippians 3:7

"And I do count them as rubbish, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him; not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith". Philippians 3:9

The focus of the Christian life is Christ and reaching the lost with the Gospel.

Colossians 2:8-10, Luke 19:10

For to me to live is Christ.....Philippians 1:21

Do not become distracted by focusing on some aspect of the culture you dwell amongst.
It may not be eternal. It may be passing away with the world. 1John 2:17

If we can use some aspect of a culture, as a doorway to reach the lost for Christ, then use it, but beware that it does not become a snare to distract you from Christ, and the Word of God and the truth.

1Corinthians 9:19 – 22

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means win some. 1 Corinthians 9:22

Lastly consider 1Corinthians 14:34. "Let your women keep silent in the Churches, for they are not permitted to speak." Is this absolute, or relative and situational? Is there a cultural element in this? Literally it means that women may not pray or sing in the Church or utter a word! But this view contradicts 1Corinthians 11:5, where it speaks of women praying and prophesying, and the context is in the Church. 1Corinthians 11:16