

Dear First Bradenton Family,

Please continue to pray daily for your Transition Team. I am enjoying working with them in this process and feel that our progress is positive. In the days ahead you will be hearing about Church-wide roundtable discussions that I hope you will prioritize and participate in. God is moving at First Baptist Church!

Surfing on the waves of technological and social change, each new generation is different than the previous generation. Generation clashes have developed in society and to a lesser extent in our churches as younger generations see things differently and have different values and expectations than the older generations. As postmodernism has taken hold, many churches have chosen to remain unchanged and unengaged with society.

To this extent, churches are having less impact on culture and society. No longer is there a dominant Christian cultural consensus. Multiculturalism is increasing at such a rate that by 2030 there will be no ethnic majority in the U.S.

The church must see itself as a missionary movement to its own culture. This means, among other things, that we will have to become better at changing our forms and methods in order to accomplish the functions of relating the gospel to today's culture. As we do that, there are some pitfalls to avoid.

First, we must not become so much like our current culture that the transforming truth of the gospel is lost. If we become too much like the culture, not only will we have lost the distinctiveness of the gospel, but we will also find that we have adopted the values of the unbelieving world we are trying to reach.

On the other hand, if we under-adapt to the culture, we lose the opportunity to speak to those immersed in the culture. We also fall prey to a different set of cultural values that appear to be spiritual on the outside but are actually lifeless and destructive on the inside. If we desire to reach all generations, we must adapt generationally, ethnically, and culturally.

May we never forget one charge against Jesus was that He enjoyed relationships with those in the culture rejected by the self-righteous Pharisees. Like it or not, change is being forced upon us. And the option to remain isolated and unchanging does not exist. We have to continuously remind ourselves that the Christian life and being a part of the Church community is all about change.

I remind you that the question I have been asking is, "What does Jesus want us to do?" I will continue preaching through the series "*Jesus Wants His Church Back*" and look forward to experiencing all that the Lord has for us in the coming days!

Come expecting God to do something in your life and in the lives of others. I am.

Your Transitional Pastor and Friend,
Allen T. Speer