

## **Culture wars at Corinth: Paul's leadership in a divided church**

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1) What is one concept that stood out to you in this article?

In the article, it talks about how Paul helped shape and form the model of leadership for the church of Corinth. While the church was starting to take shape, there were a lot of issues within leadership that caused a divide in the concept of what godly leadership ought to look like. While Paul was trying to model this for the church, one thing that stood out to me in this article was how Paul challenged the ethics of how the culture of the church needs to reflect the culture of Christ rather than the culture of society. The church of Corinth exposes these countercultural challenges but we see that leadership struggled into making that pivotal shift to make sure that they point towards God. Paul highlights several struggles, including how “Christian leadership is critical to this process” and how “Christian thinking must not be separated from Christian acting in relation to other Christians” (Campbell). Paul sets clear boundaries into knowing how Christians ought to act, considering that these were some of the most vital times for the church of Corinth. While leadership at that time was too engrained in the Greco-Roman culture they are used to, Paul tries to instill in them a spirit that is unified and a culture-shifting stance that is firm in Christ.

2) What implications does this concept have for leading in a church context?

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Paul's model of leadership is valuable, especially in the modern-day church context. In an ever-changing environment, like New York City, it is easy for a church to conform to the environment around it to get people in the doors of the building. While it is important that people hear the Word of God, that should not be the culture that the church should adopt. Instead, the church needs to stand firm in Christ and build that culture rather than try to find the newest trend to bring people in. Leaders of the church have the task of mobilizing and including the members of the church to be living witnesses of Christ while living a life that mirrors what it means to follow God. It is really tempting to have a church culture that makes the church more attractive but I think it is important to remember that the culture we ought to model is the culture that Christ has set for us in the Scriptures.

3) What needs to change in your life as a result?

I am no stranger of wanting to conform to the environment and culture around me. Living and working in NYC, there are many ideas that float in my mind that can be incorporated in the church that can bring people through the doors. However, this article is a timely reminder that the leadership of the church, myself included, needs to remember that we need to reflect who Christ is instead of what the world is, to the best of our abilities. This article is also a good reminder of how our decisions and ethical choices need to go before the Lord instead of acting based on human intuition.



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Campbell, D. A. (2018). Culture Wars at Corinth : Paul's Leadership in a Divided Church. *Christian Century*, 135(1), 28-31.