

# Welcome to the Counterculture

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By Larry E. Ball

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## The 60s Counterculture Grows Up

Fellow Christian reconstructionists, welcome to the counterculture! This may sound a little strange to your ears, but if we adopt the sociological language of the past forty years, "counterculture" may be the most appropriate nomenclature for de-scribing the modern Christian reconstructionist. Yes, as we approach the new millennium, we are part of the new counterculture!

Having been a young college student in the 60s, it almost appears as if the counterculture of the 60s has become the culture of the 90s, and the culture of the 60s has become the counterculture of the 90s. Today, we see the attitudes and values of the 60s counterculture indeed, even the same people dominating politics, media, and education. In a real sense, they set the agenda of the culture of the 90s. Those of us in the 90s who still hold to many of the values and morals against which the counterculture of the 60s rebelled are considered fringe and dangerously extremist, in other words, a modern counterculture movement itself. There undoubtedly is some truth in this concept, but discernment here is especially important.

The decade of the 60s witnessed the rise of what we generally think of as the counterculture movement. From the utopian Flower Children to the more militant Black Panthers, it was a decade of radicalism, usually among the young, challenging the prevailing beliefs of an older generation.

## The Age of "Left Over" Christianity

This change of cultures over such a short period of time is not difficult to understand. The culture of the 60s was a period of "left-over Christianity." It was therefore very vulnerable. Liberalism (including neo-orthodoxy), prevalent in the church for decades, had destroyed the Christian foundation of previous generations. The authority of the Bible had been destroyed, yet the morals associated with the Scriptures, while detached from Scriptures, still underpinned the culture of the day. The Bible may have been seen as untrustworthy, but the morals of the Bible still defined acceptable ethics. Even though God was considered irrelevant outside the walls of the local church building (the essence of modernity), divorce was still bad, adultery was still shameful, homosexuality was still abominable, and abortion was still murder.

The sit-coms of the 50s and 60s, like "Ozzie and Harriet," created an imaginary world where Americans could be happy with leftover morals from a Christian heritage, without any need for the God of that Christian heritage. It is not just accidental that Ozzie and Harriet never went to church, or even sought the counsel of the elders in trying times with their two sons. The church and the God of the church had become irrelevant, even though the morals of a lost Christianity still regulated society. Eventually this deception presented on the television screen was exposed by the counterculture of the 60s.

As a college student in the 60s, I once asked a respected mentor why pre-marital sex was wrong. The answer he gave, which was common to his generation was, "I don't know why, I just know that it is." This was typical of the culture of the 60s. It was a period trying to hold to the moral values of a lost Christianity without the foundation of that lost Christianity. As Van Til would say, they were not epistemologically self-conscious. They lived off the fruits without knowing their roots. It reminds me today of what we try to pass off as "traditional family values." It won't work. It failed in the 60s and it will fail in the 90s. "Christian family values" is the only option to humanism, not "traditional family values." Take Christ out of the phrase, and you have already given victory to the opposition. Our cultural alternatives are then no better than our opponents. We need not duplicate the errors of the 60s.

The 60s counterculture countered the prevailing values of the day. New values would replace the values of the previous generation. Since the Christian foundations of the World War II generation had been destroyed, the toppling of the superstructure would soon prove successful. A paradigm shift in values would occur over the next thirty to forty years rooted in the revolutionary period of the 60s.

In the decades of the 70s and 80s, the Moral Majority arose as a political organization seeking to restrain the drifting tide of America into immorality. In the 90s, it appears as if the Moral Majority is no more a majority. The Moral Majority has become the Moral Minority. After listening to the positive response in the polls to Bill Clinton in his impeachment trial, I was awakened to the fact that my views did not coincide with the mainstream of America. I became more convinced that I was part of a new counterculture.

### **Christian Countercultural Revolutionaries**

Today, at the end of the 90s, we have a new culture. It is a culture without either the foundations of Christianity or the Christian superstructure of morals which carried the culture of the 60s. This new culture is rooted in a new religion floundering in the sea of relativism. In the 90s the modern culture through civil government, statist educational institutions, and an ungodly media, tells us what values are acceptable in modern society. The values coming from them are anti-Christian values. We are told (with little resistance from the church) that divorce is normal, adultery is fun, homosexuality is love, and abortion is a matter left for the god of personal choice. A revolution has been accomplished, and it would appear that we have lost!

However, there is a new generation of Christian reconstructionists arising who take issue with the accepted values of our modern culture and the salvific hope of modern humanistic institutions. Our values and allegiance are contrary to that of our culture. We are viewed as revolutionaries. We are misrepresented and we are feared as radicals. We make others uncomfortable, even our fellow Christians in the evangelical church. However, by our firm beliefs inherited from Christian generations long ago, we will continue to challenge the prevailing beliefs and sacred institutions of our own day. We know that a Christian culture is the only hope for America. Our convictions are as dear as life itself. As such, we are the new counterculture. Welcome, my fellow Christian reconstructionists, to the counterculture!

As we become more "epistemologically self-conscious," and as we become more faithful to the God of Scripture, unlike the fruits of the old counterculture of the 60s, the long-term future belongs to us. While the modern generation loses her own soul and the souls of her children, Christian reconstructionists are quietly retaking their homes, their children, and their churches. A new paradigm shift may come in the next thirty to forty years. If it does, it will be the product of a new counterculture. This time, it will begin with us, a people seeking to take every thought captive to the Lord Jesus Christ through His gracious gospel, a people who seek to lay a more sure foundation.

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