

<p>1. Our children are becoming less capable to think critically.</p>	<p>As an educator, I can attest that this phenomenon is both real and destructive. Although our faith must be “as a little child’s” we are also told by Jesus that if we cannot trust Him in the things we see, then how can we trust Him in the things we cannot see. This is critical, because without the ability to question and reason cogently, children are relying on others to give them the answers – the world’s answers and the Church’s are often now the same.</p>
<p>2. Our culture is not becoming more hostile it’s just becoming better at it.</p>	<p>Not only is technology creating a culture that prizes efficiency, but it is increasingly becoming more compartmentalized and alien to the concepts of Creation, God and sin. Compartmentalization allows people to disconnect from seeing the Bible as physical and historical truth, so our evolutionary culture is taken as the authority for those areas. Our common heritage is becoming like the Greek culture that Paul encountered where we must take people back to their ‘roots’ in Genesis if the Gospel is to have meaning. No sin, no hell, no need for salvation.</p>
<p>3. Our Information Age has made relevance irrelevant.</p>	<p>As a former TV executive, I can attest that it is a medium concerned only with eyes on the tube for advertisers. As a result, people disconnect from acts and dispassionately view facts. They cannot see that facts have underlying universal truths and necessary consequences. We’ve become a spectator nation.</p>
<p>4. Efficiency has become an idol in the Church.</p>	<p>Many of us have forgotten why we gather together to worship God on the seventh day. God commanded a day of rest and the apostolic church used it as a time of fellowship, singing, communing, praying, exhortation of each other and praising God. We pay homage to efficiency because we have forgotten this is a day of rest, not time to fit more into another day.</p>
<p>5. Film, television and the internet now provide the cultural norms abdicated by the family.</p>	<p>I agree that TV, film and the internet is important, but would add music to that genre. However, I strongly feel that the school is by far the greatest influence on children’s culture, and thus our future. Today they are taught that their existence is capricious and arbitrary, pointless and without hope. Without absolute morality, they drift into lawlessness and apathy. We’ve dumbed down our schools and churches because we’ve robbed them of their motivation based upon being connected to a past with value.</p>
<p>6. We need to keep Christ as the focus of worship.</p>	<p>It’s not about us. What a simple concept, but fraught with the deepest of meanings. We have and are doing nothing to earn anything from God. It’s all about Him. He calls us, gives us faith and then invites us to worship Him with praise and worthy actions. It isn’t a self-improvement course or a chance to feel good about ourselves that we are somehow more worthy than others. It is instead a chance to receive His gifts and show thankfulness for all that we have received from Him.</p>
<p>7. Worship and life are the same thing.</p>	<p>A well-off man came to his pastor after a sermon on tithing and said he was afraid he might not have enough left for bills if he did so. The pastor offered to make up any shortage if the man agreed to tithe. The rich man agreed and then the pastor exclaimed surprise that the man would put trust in a frail human of limited means, but would not trust the God of the universe. How</p>

	little we live our faith. It should not just be pleasantries and brave words, but actions (Matthew 21:28-30; cf. I Corinthians 10:31).
8. Being in the Body of Christ requires a sense of community.	Hebrews calls us to remember that we need to be a “we” in order to exist. The Church is not a physical building but rather it is made of living stones built upon the solid rock foundation of Christ. Christ instituted the Church in order to have a source of strength, of a sharing of our different spiritual gifts in order to be complete and for our continued edification. We travel together in life in order to be our brother’s keeper and cling tenaciously to our faith as one. If we surround ourselves with like-minded people, it will so much easier to resist the world’s temptations.
9. If reaching out through friends has been neglected for years, some churches suddenly switch music styles to attract people.	How often have I sat in church meetings and heard the lament that if we just joined the crowd and became contemporary we’d attract more people. Another idol of our culture is that we need to be big to feel ok about our church, instead of seeing the lack of growth usually means lack of joy in our church. If we are filled with joy at the prospect of coming to worship God in our own church setting, we cannot stop ourselves from bringing others. It is a sign that Christ is the center of our worship and we take the time and effort to see that what we do is God pleasing.
10. God’s Word, rightly read and heard, will shake us up.	We have, as Paul says, a freedom in Christ – free from the restrictive and ritual-bound Law, but we instead inherited much greater responsibility. The Law must be preached in order to convict us of the severity of our sins and their resultant consequences, before we can really appreciate the Gospel’s free gift of grace. In our culture we often want only to hear the bottom line – to read the last chapter first, but true worship and the change it brings comes only from a genuine realization of just how unworthy we are and how great God is and His works on our behalf.
11. Most people say that liturgy is not attractive to non-believers.	Un-believers should not have the same understanding and appreciation of our worship as we should, but often what is mistaken for not being attractive to un-believers is because it is not attractive to us either. Instead of throwing out hundreds of years of history, we need to become educated about, plan and execute well our worship so that our fervor becomes contagious and attractive to the un-believer. An even better plan is to invite others to interesting Bible studies so that they can develop a relationship with members and understand Christianity and worship before they participate with us on Sunday.
12. Some churches offer so little of Christ that there is not enough to engender a lasting belief.	It all comes down to whether we believe that the Word of God speaks to us today or do we agree with the liberals and non-believers that it was for another time and we must update to be relevant. Daily, I see and hear of many to whom this is not a trivial question. I see people whose lives are transformed by hearing the truth. If we truly believe, we know that we are called to proclaim God’s truth and leave it to the Holy Spirit to convict and convert. How else can we but act?