

Paradigm Shift in Christian Parenting

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and
lean not on your own understanding.

Definition

- The term "**paradigm shift**" represents the notion of a major change in a certain thought-pattern — a radical change in personal beliefs, complex systems or organizations, replacing the former way of thinking or organizing with a radically different way of thinking or organizing.

Examples

- Science: Earth is Flat > Earth is Spherical
- Philosophy: Truth is Objective > Truth is Subjective
- Religion: Salvation by Works > Salvation by Faith

The Ultimate Paradigm Shifts

- I'm a pretty good person deserving of heaven. >
I'm a guilty sinner deserving of God's wrath.
- God loves me just the way I am. >
God loves me in spite of the way I am.
- I found Jesus. >
Jesus found me.

The Path of The Paradigm Shift

1. A real or perceived problem with the old paradigm. (Objective evidence is helpful.)
2. A new paradigm is presented. (Either by theory, by example, or by authority.)
3. The new paradigm is accepted and practiced.

Obstacles to Positive Paradigm Shift

1. Denial: “Problem? What Problem”
2. False Security: “But this is the way we have always done it.”
3. Fear of the Unknown: “What if, what if...”
4. Fear of Being Different: “People will think we are weird.”
5. Misc: “It’s too hard.” “I can’t do it.” “I don’t care.” “My feelings are hurt.”

Pastor Doug's Paradigm Shift

1. The Problem: Dallas wants to get a tattoo (just kidding). 70% of kids in church disagree with the church's teaching on sex. Over 60% of kids walk away from the church because it is irrelevant to them. What's going on with our kids?
2. The Paradigm Shift: It's my body! (my life, my mind, etc.) > Your life is not your own; you were bought at a price.

Man-Centeredness v. God-Centeredness

- We are all born with a man-centered worldview.
- The church has adopted a man-centered paradigm. (“Christian Consumerism”)
- The church must shift to a God-centered paradigm. “Jesus is Lord. He is life. Use me for your glory. My life is not my own. You bought it with your blood.”

Pastor Brent's Paradigm Shift

1. The Problem: Our schools are filled with mostly unexceptional students. They are intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally deficient.
2. The Paradigm Shift: Exceptional students are made in school > Exceptional people are raised in God-centered homes.

George Barna's Paradigm Shift

1. The Problem: The Church is not raising “Spiritual Champions.” Kids raised in the church are walking away from the Christian Faith in alarming numbers.

Definition

- **Spiritual Champion:** An irrepressible follower of Jesus Christ who accepts the Bible as truth, lives by its principles, and seeks ways to impact the world and continually deepen his or her relationship with God.

The Discovery

- Barna surveyed thousands of spiritual champions hoping to find patterns, trends, or commonalities to account for their exceptional Christian lives.
- The results were shocking.

The Paradigm Shift

- Churches produce spiritual champions >

Parents produce spiritual champions

“But one of the lessons that emerged from the research was that churches *alone* do not and cannot have much influence on children. In fact, the greatest influence a church may have in affecting children is by impacting their parents.”

“The facts have been indisputably clear: In assessing the impact of churches, schools, and parents, it is the latter who have the most dramatic personal influence on a child. Yet we also learned that most parents are not prepared to be effective in their roles. They often lack the self-confidence needed to fully invest themselves in the process.”

Barna's Key Assumptions:

1. It is important to raise children to know, love, and serve God with all their hearts, minds, strength, and souls.
2. Parents do not have complete control of the shaping of their children, but they do have substantial influence.
3. There must be some common factors that are pertinent to the child-rearing efforts of parents who successfully raise spiritual champions.

So, what were the results?

- Read the book.
- Take the class.
- Observe or ask other families that have raised spiritual champions.
- Don't be afraid or defensive when you find out you have some changes to make.
- God is gracious and His Word is true.

Just a few key principles.

- Revolutionary Parents (RPs) are God-centered. They aim to integrate their faith in Christ into every dimension of their lives.
- RPs read the Bible both for personally and together with their children, though most admitted to not having a rigid Bible-reading plan. Their goal was not just to learn about God and His commands, but also to cultivate their worship and praise of God.

More common factors.

- RPs had a goal and a plan to raise spiritual champions (and it wasn't just to get their kids "saved").
- RPs leaned on the church for support, but never expected the church to take responsibility for the spiritual growth of their children.
- RPs were definitely in charge, but adopted a coaching model (and not the kind of coach that yells and screams--No Parent Tantrums!)

A few more...

- RPs spend a lot of time with their kids so that they can coach “in the moment”. The research busted the myth of “quality time”.
- RPs regularly serve in the church. They also engage in other acts of service as a family.
- RPs train their children to filter everything through a biblical worldview and regulate their use of media.

A few facts:

- RPs are more likely to:
 1. Be married.
 2. Be single-income households.
 3. Identify their children as their main earthly focus in life during their parenting years.

A “peculiar” observation.

“Most Americans respect but do not relate to households in which parenting is taken so seriously. In fact, many parents view such an approach as a challenge or threat to their own family choices and ways of life. Our research found that parents are more likely to raise spiritual champions if they accept the fact that from day one their parenting efforts will stray from the norm and put them at odds with parents who are pursuing a more conventional approach.”

What should your response be?

1. Be humble. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.
2. Put the past behind you.
3. Stop parenting out of fear or pride. Seek to glorify God with your whole life, and your kids will follow your lead.
4. Come to church willing to serve.
5. Embrace the paradigm shift. It's the way God intended, and the plan that He blesses.

How can COBC help?

- The difficulty: How do you facilitate a new paradigm when much of the old paradigm remains?
- The plan:
 1. Educate our parents.
 2. Equip our parents.
 3. Limit programs that feed the “drop-off” mentality.
 4. Restructure old programs and provide new programs that cultivate parental involvement and family togetherness.

Education and Equipping

- Sermons.
- Books and websites.
- Revolutionary Parenting class.
- Growing Kids God's Way class.
- Navigating the New World classes.
- LifeHouse—Parents always welcome.
- Mentoring for parents and young couples, both formal and informal.

A Special Call to Dads

- Research affirms the Bible's admonition for Dad's to train and instruct their children.
Ephesians 6:4
- We can help you and work around your schedule.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.