

I'm Quitting Facebook to Join Faithbook Because My WWJD Bracelet Told Me to by Kurt Willems

By Kurt Willems

The end of the age has come. No, not the rapture, but the end of Facebook. There I said it... finished. As of today, I am shutting down all Facebook communication.

"Why?" you ask. I'll gladly answer.

I'm convinced that the God revealed in Jesus desires that Christians avoid becoming convoluted by the world. We Christians often look more like "world-lians" and today I'm done representing the wrong team. As evidence of my sincerity, its "goodbye Facebook" and hello "Faithbook."

I can hear it now. Some of you are saying..."but Kurt, you have thousands of friends on Mark Z's dorm room creation. There's no way you're serious!" Don't believe me, check out this screenshot from my MacBook (Maybe some good soul will produce GodBook?):



That's right. Faithbook. I was on Facebook a couple days back and came across an ad for Faithbook (probably the best marketing strategy ever to use the secular competition's ad system to track visitors! Spiritual war = won!). I followed said link to above referenced site and felt the need to ask - WWJD?... time for a sanctified social swap! So, you're all invited to join me in the online social network of the faithful few. It may not have all the special features of Facebook, but it gives us Christians the opportunity to have a safe, de-secularized, prayer-filled, alternative.

Ok, I've gone on far enough.

A Christian Culture Trend that needs to Change

This post contains a couple of errors. No, I will not be closing my Facebook account any time soon. And although I believe that the intentions of the founders and users of Faithbook may be fine (my goal is not to mock them as I am confident that their motives were pure*), I want to use Faithbook (like its predecessor, GodTube) as an example of a trend in Christian culture that needs to change.

Christian culture is known for its alternatives. Think of alternatives in popular culture. Instead of Dr. Pepper, you can drink Dr. Thunder. Instead of sugar, there's Splenda. Problem... the alternatives never measure up to the original. Yet in Christian culture, we love to propagate alternatives. I want to suggest that there is an element of value in designing an alternative culture as Christ-followers. In theory, the "Christian sub-culture" is not bad. Unfortunately, Christian culture often expresses the wrong kind of alternative.

In the New Testament, we're given a picture of the Kingdom people of God who organize themselves around an alternative king, namely Jesus. The greatest alternative is not a second-rate imitation of things from the popular culture, but rather a community (many communities in local contexts) who together live in a radically different way - the way of Jesus.

The kingdom of God ought to be known as a counter cultural contrast-society, not an "almost as good as the popular culture" or "safe from the evils of all things secular" bubble. Scot McKnight says it well: "The kingdom of God, in short compass, is the society in which the will of God is established to transform all of life."** Some transformative life-signs include:

- Love of God
- Love of neighbors within and outside of the covenant community
- Seeking the welfare of all people
- Defying hatred and greed
- Feeding the hungry
- Resisting the lure of the empire in all its forms
- Clothing the naked
- Bearing each others' burdens
- Choosing self-sacrifice over the sword
- Redistribution of resources for the purposes of social uplift
- Wonderful marriages
- Love of enemies
- Sexual purity
- Healthy conflict / resolution in the midst of conflict
- Learning more about the Scriptures as an open-minded community of disciples
- Healings, signs, wonders
- Justice for the marginalized
- Dignifying every human person

Imagine if these were the things that the church was actually known for. Do you think that the popular culture would take notice? Do you think that as the church follows Jesus that perhaps

the world might follow the church? I think this is the kind of "alternative" that the New Testament envisions.

So, let's determine to show pop-culture what a true Christian counter-culture has to offer. We don't need to create second-rate alternatives because the Kingdom of God is far better! Guided as communities empowered by the Holy Spirit, fresh possibilities will come to life. As a result, the rest of humanity will come knocking on our doors, begging for what our contrast-society of New Creation can do to make the world a better place. May this be the mark of the church in our generation!

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**To anyone who has used "Faithbook." Please do not feel that I believe you to be in error or that your use of such means that you are not a great person... because you are!!!! In fact, I am currently wearing a Christian bracelet of some sort and indulge in many things from the Christian sub-culture. I am critiquing as someone who is part of the family, not attempting to judge you as inferior. I only use "Faithbook" because it is a clear illustration of a bigger kingdom point. Who knows, perhaps its FB integration makes for some cool features?*

*** Scot McKnight, A Community Called Atonement, Living Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 9.*