

## Seven Convictions About Culture for the Local Church

In keeping with the local church's goal to nurture unity in diverse communities, we will discuss cultural issues with biblical intelligence and thoughtful care. Followers of Jesus Christ are unified by their faith in Him. They are not to be divided by race or ethnicity or any other secondary factors. The Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and life and godliness.

We seek to protect *FiveStone* member churches from narrow perspectives that feed divisions and cultural factions that detract from the church's primary responsibility to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to baptize and teach those disciples. Church shepherds should speak to cultural issues *from* the Bible and *for* the proclamation of the gospel.

Seven cultural convictions of churches in the *FiveStone Churches* network:

1. We will focus on Jesus Christ—through His gospel—as the change-maker in the human heart, leading to authentic, God-pleasing relationships.
2. We will speak truth in biblical love, which can be expressed in firmness as well as in tenderness as the need requires.
3. We will not allow cultural issues to set the local church's agenda or define the local church. The church is to be gospel-centered, not issues-centered. Cultural issues may be addressed as they impact the church's core responsibility of disciple-making.
4. We will be deeply wary of joining with non-evangelical voices and, while we may quote or reference them, we will clearly state that we do not necessarily advocate their causes or agree with their rhetoric or positions. We will diligently research all sources so we accurately reference their views.
5. We will consider valid perspectives on various sides of cultural issues, but will present perspectives from biblically sound followers of Jesus Christ.
6. We will not flatten complexities of cultural issues; these issues will not be distilled into stereotypes or simplicities. We will be diligently thoughtful in issues of race, ethnicity and other human relationships. We will seek to understand varied perspectives, but our views will comply with our best understanding of the breadth of the Scriptures' teaching.
7. The local church elders have unique responsibility and authority to shape the church's teaching and preaching. A plurality of elder voices from the pulpit and throughout the church are to forge biblical and thoughtful responses to cultural issues. Elders will focus on Doctrine, Discipline, Direction and Discipleship in the local church.

