



CENTRAL SHELBY CHURCH OF CHRIST

working and worshipping together to serve the Lord



FITTING IN

In the Summer of 1972 my father moved our family from western Canada to a small farming community in northeast Arkansas. What a culture shock! We were in a different country, but it seemed as though we were in a different world.

The climate was certainly something us kids had never before suff-- uh, experienced. The Summertime humidity levels could soak a person's clothing as soon as he walked out his door. And where were the Winter snows to which we had become so accustomed?

The landscape was certainly different. No more rolling hills, but rather flat cotton fields for as far as the eye could see.

But the biggest change was the people. Most of them were friendly. (In fact, the brethren in the local church were among the friendliest I have ever known.) But everyone talked differently, speaking with a unique drawl. And their language included terms we weren't accustomed to. (I can remember a teacher asking me my first day of school if I had any 'kin' in the area. What were 'kin'?) Of course, we were the 'outsiders,' and the school kids frequently mocked our Canadian accent and mannerisms.

That first year was rough, but we slowly but surely acclimated to our surroundings. By the time I had finished public school seven years later, we had become regular Arkansans. We had 'fit in.' That's OK, I suppose.

Turning from a Canadian into an Arkansan is one thing. Turning from a disciple of Christ into a regular 'world' person, however, is another thing entirely. And such is happening, we fear, to too many disciples these days. Dear Christian, has it happened to you?

The Bible says that *"our citizenship is in heaven"* (Philippians 3:20). That simply means that heaven is our homeland, our nation. For the time being we have to live in this world, but 'this world is not our home.' We are begged *"as sojourners and pilgrims"* to *"abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul"* (1 Peter 2:11). We aren't supposed to be fitting in, beloved!

Why, then, are so many of us trying like the world to be rich? Being rich is alright, but none of us have any business desiring to be so, do we? (1 Timothy 6:9)

Why, then, are so many of us dressing like the world, wearing tight-fitting clothing or uncovering our bodies like they do? Aren't we to be professing godliness by how we dress? (1 Timothy 2:10)

If we aren't supposed to be fitting in, why then are some of us talking like the world, telling crude jokes and taking God's name in vain?

Why, then, are some of us not speaking to others about Christ? Could it be that to do so would make us feel like a geek, an outsider, a... a... a foreigner? (Hmmm...)

If we aren't supposed to be adapting to this world, why then are some of us allowing filthy TV and internet programming to pollute our minds? Isn't this what the world does?!

Why, then, are some of us allowing the cares of this world to keep us from the worship of our God?

HAVE WE ADAPTED? HAVE WE FIT IN? And it's all happened so slowly that we undoubtedly haven't even noticed.

"IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP!" (Romans 13:11). Indeed it is! How could we even think of being accustomed to, adjusting to, acclimating to this world? *"The world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"* (1 John 2:17). Let's get our thinking untwisted. Our citizenship is in heaven!

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:2).

--Mike Noble