



## WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL Special Edition July 30, 2014

### **A Call to Action**

By Freddy Dabis

One of the more difficult things for Christians to do, as it relates to personal priorities and life actions, is to make the main thing the main thing. In fact, it is difficult for many to even identify the "main thing." As believers, our priority should be God and his will. But while many give lip service to that priority, it is rather rare for self-identified Christians to actually put forth the effort necessary to make God's priorities the "main thing" in daily life. The difficulty is that we must not only go against the cultural tide, which is strenuous enough in itself, but we must do it while also fighting a spiritual war. The two together tend to tax most believers beyond what they are willing to bear.

As we look at how we should promote God's ways through our lives, there are two arenas where we must put effort. One is a temporal battle and the other one is spiritual. One fights to implement policy in society and the other fights for the very souls of those who are separated from God.

There are those who believe Christians should focus only on the temporal battles. That is, we need to implement and enforce moral rules in the culture which promote Christian morality (as they define it).

On the other side there are believers who think Christians should have nothing to do with any kind of "worldly" exertion geared toward making and implementing public policy. Rather, we should spend all our efforts just sharing Christ.

But the biblical position is not an either/or proposition. God is interested both in the souls of humans and in his will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Christians must focus on matters related to the spiritual arena while, at the same time, not neglecting public policy.

The big problem, as we seek the right balance, is that relatively few Christians are equipped to do either of these things. Most do not have the skills or motivation to impact the world for Christ. All Christians need to get up to speed in both areas, but, sadly, few will.

### **A Goal and a Plan**

For those, though, who do wish to get in the game, I am going to lay out what is necessary. It is one of those things which is actually very simple, but is not easy. In fact, I might go so far as to say it is immensely difficult. But it can be accomplished by anyone who decides to make the effort. To pull this off, individual Christians need a goal and a plan of personal action.

The goal has already been decided by God. It is to make disciples of all people. This requires that we have a different mindset than what most Christians hold. We have to come to a place where we see God's calling to be disciple makers as the most important thing in our lives. With that, we must see our professional and leisure activities as the platform for fulfilling God's calling on our lives. Most Christians have the opposite view – that the most important thing is one's profession and other personal activities. God's purpose is typically relegated to the fringes of life. This must change.

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As for the plan, the specific course of action will be slightly different for each Christian, but will follow a common path. This plan requires:

1. A basic understanding of the Christian worldview foundation,
2. An understanding of God's calling on your life,
3. A place to implement the calling (profession, avocation, etc.), and
4. A deliberate plan for fulfilling your particular calling.

One of the key matters that must be addressed is to make the goal and the plan conscious. Most believers have some kind of vague sense as to what they "ought" to do. Very few have made a deliberate effort to make these a reality in life.

### Motivation Matters

Beyond the goal and the plan is some kind of motivation. There are all kinds of reasons why people do what they do. More specifically, for our purposes here, there are all kinds of reasons Christians seek to engage the work of God in the world. The various reasons result in particular levels of exertion and in distinct kinds of effort related to the work of God's kingdom. Some motives lead to very superficial service while others lead to active and purposeful work. Some of the more common motivations people have for doing Christian work include:

- To enjoy the fellowship of one's spiritual family,
- To fulfill a sense of duty,
- To satisfy the expectations of others,
- To fight against some perceived evil, or
- To fulfill God's calling.

In secular society when a person decides to take on a task, the outcome is generally seen to be more important than the motivation for doing it. We see a task that needs doing and, regardless of our personal motivation, feel compelled to

go do it. But in the Christian faith, the outcome is never divorced from the purpose of God. As such, our desire to accomplish a particular purpose will never originate from ourselves or from other people. And results that are borne of God's purposes will always have an eternal goal, not a temporal one – even though there will be positive temporal outcomes.

There have been times in American history when the ones holding the reigns of power claimed to be Christians and they promoted what we would consider moral public policy based on biblical principles. All too often, unfortunately, the motivation these people had for promoting particular policies was not to accomplish the purpose of God. Rather, it was to accomplish a temporal result to benefit society. What inevitably happens in those cases, though, is that when the leadership changes to people who are not connected with God, the policies get changed, as well. If the focus had been on connecting people with God, when leadership changed it would change to others who also hold to the purposes of God.

But in our day we see a different result. We see new leaders who have entirely different purposes, and they promote policy that does not even superficially correspond to God's ideals. Until we get new leaders who again put a priority on God's purposes, policy will not be what it ought to be. The focus has to be on changed hearts, not on policy. Policy follows motivation, not the other way around.

### The Guts to Go

One of the most difficult barriers for Christians to cross in following God is to get to the place where they are willing to take a hit for Christ. There are actually some who will have to take a hit by being physically persecuted, or even martyred, for their Christian faith. There are others who will take a financial hit. But for the majority

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of believers, the hit will be some kind of social stigma. As the Christian faith is more and more looked down upon by society as narrow-minded and bigoted, faithful Christians will be ushered to the fringes of society and not allowed to partake in the full scope of what is happening in the culture.

As we find ourselves more and more in this situation, there is only one way to get past it. We will have to find the backbone to actually stand against those who would put down the Christian faith. There are two things which must happen.

First, individual Christians are going to have to develop a personal knowledge foundation which allows them to intelligently defend their position. In truth, the Christian view is the rational one and the anti-Christian position is totally irrational. But if Christians are not able to shine a light on the irrationality of the Christ haters, we will not be able to make our case in the public square.

Second, we must be willing to suffer. The fact that the anti-Christian forces are irrational means they will seek to persecute us no matter what we say. And as long as they hold the reigns of power, they will have the ability to cause us suffering. As we stand strong and share a rational gospel witness, we will have to be willing to take the hits in order to get the message out.

Sadly, most Christians are not prepared for either of these things. They do not have the necessary knowledge base and they are not willing to suffer for their faith. This has to change. We live in a day when anti-Christian forces control many of the levers of power in the culture. In many places they have the ability to open and close economic, educational, informational and social doors – and they are not shy about slam-

ming doors in Christian's faces. If we, as Christians, intend to push back, we are going to have to begin with God's purposes. We are going to have to win our opponents to Christ. And as we do that, we are going to have to promote public policy which corresponds with the will and ways of God.

It is easy enough to say, and even affirm, the things which have been stated here. But we always end up circling back to the place where we actually have to do something. We are going to have to educate ourselves in ways which allow us to share a credible and understandable message, and we must put ourselves out there in ways which may cause us to suffer for God's kingdom. This call to action is a call to willingness – willingness to put ourselves out to make God a priority. I wonder who will answer the call.

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